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M. Colett. March 7. 2 00
To follow the Master we must
some time be alone.
(girl who wondered away.)

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TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1920

268
T179

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph.D.

7569

NEW YORK CHICAGO
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Bruce Barnes

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LESSONS FOR 1920

JANUARY—MARCH

Studies in the Lives of Peter and John

(Second Half of a Six-Months' Course)

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Early Leaders and Kings of Israel

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(First Half of a Six-Months' Course)

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SELECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON COMMITTEE

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I. M. Acts 1.1-9. WITNESSES FOR JESUS.
T. Acts 2.1-8. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
W. Acts 2.14-21. PROPHECY FULFILLED.
T. Acts 2.22-32. THE RESURRECTION FORETOLD.
F. Acts 2.33-42. THREE THOUSAND CONVERTED.
S. Psalm 16.1-11. THE PATH OF LIFE.
S. John 16.7-15. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

II. M. Acts 3.1-10. PETER AND JOHN HEAL A LAME MAN.
T. Acts 3.11-18. THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME.
W. Acts 3.19-26. THE CALL TO REPENTANCE.
T. Isa. 35.1-10. THE KING'S HIGHWAY.
F. Mark 1.21-34. HEALING THE SICK.
S. John 14.8-14. GREATER WORKS TO BE DONE.
S. Mark 11.20-26. STRENGTH FROM GOD.

III. M. Acts 4.1-7. THE ARREST AND TRIAL.
T. Acts 4.8-16. THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN.
W. Acts 4.17-22, 29-31. HEARKENING UNTO GOD.
T. Psalm 124.1-8. HELP IN THE LORD.
F. Acts 5.17-25. DELIVERED FROM PRISON.
S. 2 Tim. 4.6-8, 16-18. THE GOOD FIGHT.
S. Heb. 11.32-38. THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.

IV. M. Acts 5.1-11. PETER STANDS UP FOR TRUTH AND HONESTY.
T. Psalm 15.1-5. A CITIZEN OF ZION.
W. Mt. 6.1-8. SINCERE WORSHIP.
T. Eph. 4.25-32. PUTTING AWAY EVIL.
F. 1 Sam. 3.10-18. TELLING THE TRUTH.
S. Mt. 23.1-15. WARNING AGAINST HYPOCRISY.
S. Prov. 6.16-23. GOD HATES FALSEHOOD.

V. M. 2 Kings 17.24, 32-41. THE SAMARITAN'S CORRUPT WORSHIP.
T. John 4.19-26. JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.
W. John 4.35-42. SAMARITANS BELIEVING ON JESUS.
T. Acts 8.4-13. PHILIP PREACHES THE GOSPEL.
F. Acts 8.14-25. PETER AND JOHN IN SAMARIA.
S. Acts 8.26-35. TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS.
S. Mt. 10.1-8. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE.

VI. M. Acts 9.32-43. PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA.
T. Psalm 61.1-8. GOD'S PROTECTION.
W. Luke 5.17-26. JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN.
T. Eph. 3.14-19. THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL POWER.
F. James 5.12-20. PRAYER AND HEALING.
S. Mt. 8.5-13. THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.
S. Luke 8.40-48. THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

VII. M. Acts 10.1-8. THE VISION OF CORNELIUS.
T. Acts 10.9-20. THE VISION OF PETER.
W. Acts 10.21-33. PETER AND CORNELIUS.
T. Acts 10.34-43. PETER'S MESSAGE.
F. Acts 10.44-48. THE SPIRIT GIVEN TO GENTILES.
S. Acts 11.1-11. THE CHURCH AND THE GENTILES.
S. Psalm 67.1-7. ALL PEOPLES PRAISING GOD.

VIII. M. Acts 12.1-10. PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.
T. Acts 12.11-19. PETER REJOINS HIS FRIENDS.
W. Psalm 34.1-8. GOD'S CARE OF US.
T. Mt. 7.7-11. HOW PRAYER HELPS.
F. Phil. 4.1-7. REJOICE AND PRAY.
S. 2 Kings 6.8-17. GOD DELIVERS ELISHA.
S. Luke 22.39-46. JESUS AT PRAYER.

IX. M. 1 Peter 2.1-5, 11, 12. PETER WRITES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LIVING.
T. 1 Peter 2.19-25. DOING AS JESUS DID.
W. 1 Sam. 26.5-12. DAVID SPARES SAUL.
T. Rom. 12.14-21. "OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD."
F. 1 Peter 4.12-19. PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.
S. 1 Peter 5.1-11. ON GUARD.
S. Mt. 5.1-10. THE BLESSED LIFE.

X. M. 1 John 4.7-14. JOHN WRITES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LOVE.

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T. 1 John 4.15-21. God is Love.
W. 1 Cor. 13.1-13. The Greatest Thing.
T. Luke 10.25-37. Loving One Another.
F. 1 John 3.13-18. Showing our Love.
S. Philemon 8-20. Brotherly Love.
S. Mt. 22.34-40. The Great Commandments.

XI. M. Rev. 1.1-8. The Revealing of Jesus Christ.
T. Rev. 1.9-18. John on Patmos.
W. Rev. 5.1-7. The Sealed Book.
T. Rev. 5.8-14. "Worthy is the Lamb."
F. Isa. 6.1-8. Isaiah's Vision.
S. John 21.20-25. The Disciple that Testifies.
S. Rev. 3.7-13. A Message for the Church.

XII. M. Rev. 7.9-17. John's Picture of Worship in Heaven.
T. Rev. 19.1-10. Worshiping God.
W. John 14.1-6. The Heavenly Home.
T. Rev. 21.1-5. A New Heaven and Earth.
F. Rev. 4.1-11. The Throne in Heaven.
S. Mt. 25.31-40. "Come, ye Blessed."
S. Mt. 25.41-46. "Inasmuch as ye did it not."

XIII. M. Acts 3.1-10. A Lame Man Made Well.
T. Acts 4.13-22. The Story of two Brave Men.
W. Acts 12.1-11. How an Angel Helped Peter.
T. John 21.15-19. "Lovest thou me?"
F. 1 John 1.1-9. Bearing Witness.
S. Rev. 21.21-27. The City of God.
S. Rev. 22.1-5. The River of Life.

SECOND QUARTER

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T. Judges 2.11-19. Israel Ruled by Judges.
W. Judges 2.20—3.6. Israel Tested.
T. Judges 10.6-16. Israel Repenting.
F. Psalm 103.1-14. God's Mercy.
S. Isa. 63.1-9. "Mighty to Save."
S. Gal. 6.1-10. Continuing in Well-doing.

Or, Easter Lesson.

M. Luke 24.1-12. Approaching Christ's Tomb.
T. Luke 24.13-27. Christ Unrecognized.
W. Luke 24.28-35. Christ Made Known.
T. John 20.24-31. A Doubter Convinced.
F. John 21.1-14. At the Sea of Galilee.
S. John 21.15-25. Peter and the Risen Lord.
S. 1 Cor. 15.12-20. Hope in Christ.

II. M. Judges 4.1-9. Israel's Cry Heard.
T. Judges 4.10-16. Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel.
W. Judges 5.1-20. A Song of Victory.
T. Psalm 46.1-11. God our Refuge.
F. Heb. 11.32-40. Faith and Victory.
S. Rom. 8.31-39. More than Conquerors.
S. Rev. 7.9-17. Eternal Deliverance.

III. M. Judges 6.1-10. Israel Oppressed.
T. Judges 6.11-24. Gideon's Call.
W. Judges 6.25-32. Gideon's Fidelity.
T. Judges 6.33-40. Gideon Encouraged.
F. Judges 7.1-8, 16-21. The Victory of Gideon's Band.
S. Sam. 16.1-13. David's Call.
S. Heb. 11.23-30. Power of Faith.

IV. M. Ruth 1.1-10. Looking toward Canaan.
T. Ruth 1.14-22. Ruth's Wise Choice.
W. Ruth 2.1-12. Ruth Gleaning.
T. Ruth 2.13-22. Ruth Favored.
F. Ruth 4.1-11. A Kinsman Redeemer.
S. Ruth 4.14-22. A Name in Israel.
S. Heb. 4.1-16. The Promise and our Responsibility.

V. M. 1 Sam. 1.9-18, 27, 28. Samuel Given, and Lent to the Lord.
T. 1 Sam. 2.1-11. Hannah's Thanksgiving.
W. 1 Sam. 2.18-20, 26. Samuel Serving Eli.
T. 1 Sam. 3.1-13, 19, 20. The Call of the Boy Samuel.
F. Mark 1.14-20. Jesus Calling Disciples.
S. Acts 26.15-20. Paul's Account of his Call.
S. 2 Tim. 4.1-8. Paul's Charge to Timothy.

VI. M. 1 Sam. 2.12-17. Sin of Eli's Sons.
T. 1 Sam. 2.27-36. Prophecy Concerning Eli's Sons.
W. 1 Sam. 4.5-18. Eli and his Sons.
T. Prov. 22.1-12. Value of a Good Name.
F. Prov. 10.1-16. A Wise Son.
S. Gal. 6.6-18. Sowing and Reaping.
S. Prov. 23.29-35. Evils of Intemperance.

VII. M. 1 Sam. 7.2-17. Victory under Samuel.
T. Ex. 18.13-26. Jethro's Counsel Accepted.
W. Josh. 1.1-9. Strong in the Lord.
T. Acts 6.1-8. Selected for Service.
F. Acts 27.20-25. A Servant of God.
S. Joel 3.9-17. The Weak Becoming Strong.
S. 2 Cor. 2.12-17. Triumph in Christ.

VIII. M. 1 Sam. 8.1-9. Israel's Demand for a King.
T. 1 Sam. 8.10-20. A Message from God.
W. 1 Sam. 9.1-14. Saul's Errand.
T. 1 Sam. 9.15-21, 25—10.1. Israel's First King.
F. 1 Sam. 10.17-27. Saul Presented to Israel.
S. Acts 9.10-19. A Chosen Vessel.
S. 1 Cor. 12.18-31. To Every Man his Work.

IX. M. 1 Sam. 13.1-7. Enemies of Israel.
T. 1 Sam. 14.1-13. Jonathan and his Armorbearer.
W. 1 Sam. 14.15-23. Israel Delivered.
T. 1 Sam. 14.47-52. Saul Victorious.
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S. 1 Peter 4.1-14. Rejoicing in Trials.
S. 1 John 2.13-20. Overcoming.

X. M. 1 Sam. 15.1-12. God's Command to Saul.
T. 1 Sam. 15.13-26. Saul's Failure.
W. 1 Sam. 15.27-35. Saul's Rejection Foretold.
T. Heb. 6.1-12. Danger of Disobedience.
F. Jude 1-11. Fruits of Evildoing.
S. Rev. 2.1-7. Call to Repentance.
S. Rev. 22.7-14. Fruits of Obedience.

XI. M. 1 Sam. 16.1-13. A Shepherd Boy Chosen King.
T. 1 Sam. 16.14-23. David in Saul's Court.
W. Eccl. 11.7—12.7 Serving God in Youth.
T. 2 Tim. 3.14-17. Taught from Childhood.
F. Phil. 3.1-14. All for Christ.
S. Rev. 1.1-8. "Kings and priests unto God."
S. Psalm 2. The Great King.

XII. M. Psalm 23. The Lord our Shepherd.
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W. Ezek. 34.11-16, 23-26. The True Shepherd.
T. John 10.11-18. The Good Shepherd.
F. Luke 15.1-10. Seeking the Lost.
S. 1 Peter 5.1-11. "He careth for you."
S. Heb. 13.12-25. The Ever-living Shepherd.

XIII. M. 1 Sam. 12.1-5, 13-25. The Noble Life of Samuel.
T. Judges 4.4-16. Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel.
W. Judges 7.1-8, 16-21. The Victory of Gideon's Band.
T. Ruth 1.14-22. Ruth's Choice.
F. 1 Sam. 3.1-13, 19, 20. The Call of the Boy Samuel.
S. 1 Sam. 9.15-21; 9.25—10.1. Israel's First King.
S. 1 Sam. 16.4-16. A Shepherd Chosen King.
Psalm 23. The Lord our Shepherd.

THIRD QUARTER

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F. 1 Sam. 17.41-54. David Slays Goliath.
S. 1 Sam. 17.55—18.9. Friends and an Enemy at Court.
S. Psalm 18.25-36. Thanksgiving for Deliverance.

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T. 1 Sam. 20.1-11. The Friends Confer.
W. 1 Sam. 20.12-23. A Plan of Action.
T. 1 Sam. 20.24-32. A King's Enmity.
F. 1 Sam. 20.35-42. The Prince's Friendship.
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S. John 15.1-15. The Friendship of Jesus.

III. M. 1 Sam. 26.1-12. David Spares Saul's Life.
T. 1 Sam. 24.1-12. Saul at David's Mercy.
W. 1 Sam. 24.16-22. David Puts Saul to Shame.
T. 1 Sam. 26.13-25. David Reproves Saul.
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S. Mt. 26.47-56. Jesus and his Enemies.
S. Rom. 12.9-21. Vengeance is mine.

IV. M. 1 Sam. 31.1-6. Death of Saul.
T. 2 Sam. 1.17-27. David's Lamentation.
W. 2 Sam. 2.1-7. David Made King of Judah.
T. 2 Sam. 5.1-10. David Crowned King of All Israel.
F. Mt. 25.14-29. True Success.
S. 1 Cor. 9.16-27. Winning a Crown.
S. 2 Tim. 4.1-8. A Crown of Righteousness.

V. M. Num. 4.4-15. Reverence for Holy Things.
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W. 2 Sam. 6.11-17. David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem.
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S. 1 Chron. 16.37-43. Ministering before the Ark.
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VI. M. 2 Sam. 9.1-13. The Kingly Kindness of David.
T. Psalms 26.1-12. David's Prayer.
W. Mt. 25.34-40 "Ye did it unto me."
T. 2 Sam. 7.1-11. David's Kingly Desire.

F. Deut. 28.1-14. Blessings for Obedience.
S. Col. 3.12-23. A Heart of Kindness.
S. 1 Thes. 5.14-24. Royal Precepts.

VII. M. 2 Sam. 11.6-17. David and Uriah.
T. 2 Sam. 11.18-27. Joab's Message.
W. 2 Sam. 12.1-14. Nathan's Parable.
T. 2 Sam. 12.15-23. David's Sorrow for Sin.
F. 2 Sam. 13.23-36. Absalom and Amnon.
S. 2 Sam. 15.1-12. Absalom's Rebellion.
S. 2 Sam. 18.24-33. Absalom's Death.

VIII. M. Psalm 51. A Prayer for Pardon.
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T. Luke 18.1-14. Humility and Forgiveness.
F. Mt. 18.15-22. Seventy Times Seven.
S. Isaiah 55.1-13. A Call to Pardon and Peace.
S. Isaiah 12.1-16. The Joy of Salvation.

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T. Prov. 31.10-20. A Wise Woman.
F. Prov. 31.21-31. A Godly Woman.
S. Eccl. 12.1-14. Youthful Choices.
S. James 1.5-17. God's Gift of Wisdom.

X. M. 1 Kings 5.1-12. Hiram, King of Tyre.
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W. 1 Kings 6.11-22. The Temple Building Completed.
T. 1 Kings 6.23-35. The Temple Adorned.
F. 1 Kings 8.1-11. The Temple Dedicated.
S. 1 Kings 8.22-30. Solomon's Prayer.
S. 1 Cor. 3.9-17. The Temple of God.

XI. M. 1 Kings 9.1-9. God's Covenant with Solomon.
T. 1 Kings 10.1-3. The Visit of the Queen of Sheba.
W. 1 Kings 10.18-29. Magnificence of Solomon.
T. Prov. 1.1-9. Solomon's Wisdom.
F. Mt. 12.38-45. A Greater than Solomon.
S. 1 Kings 3.16-28. Solomon's Practical Judgment.
S. Mt. 6.25-34. True Riches.

XII. M. Prov. 23.19-25. Intemperance and Poverty.
T. Prov. 23.29-35. Intemperance and Woe.
W. Hab. 2.9-20. Intemperance and War.
T. Amos 6.1-7. Temperance and Patriotism.
F. Daniel 1.8-19. Temperance and Health.
S. Jer. 35.1-11, 18, 19. Temperance Rewarded.
S. 1 Cor. 8.1-13. Personal Liberty and Charity.

XIII. M. Psalm 72. The King and the King of Kings.
T. 1 Sam. 10.17-27. Saul Chosen King.
W. 1 Sam. 15.10-23. Saul Humiliated and Rejected.
T. 1 Sam. 16.1-13. David Chosen.
F. 2 Sam. 5.1-10. David Crowned and Conquering.
S. Psalm 51.1-13. Divid's Sin Forgiven.
S. 1 Kings 10.26—11.6. Solomon's Glory and Shame.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. M. Mt. 2.1-12. The Infant Jesus Honored.
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W. Mt. 1.18-25. The Virgin Mother.
T. Mt. 2.13-18. The Innocents Slain.
F. Mt. 2.19-23. Jesus at Nazareth.
S. Luke 2.41-52. The Boy Jesus in the Temple.
S. Isa. 60.11-22. The Coming Kingdom.

II. M. Mt. 3.13—4.11. Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.
T. Isa. 11.1-10. The Spirit on Jesus.
W. Mt. 3.1-12. John the Baptist Baptizing.
T. Jas. 1.12-18. Enduring Temptation.
F. 1 Cor. 10.1-12. Example of Warning.
S. Heb. 2.9-18. Able to Help.
S. Heb. 4.1-16. Tempted and Tried.

III. M. Mt. 4.12-25. Teaching, Preaching, Healing.
T. Luke 5.1-11. The Draught of Fishes.
W. Mark 1.21-28. A New Teaching.
T. Mark 10.17-22. Follow me.
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A FEW HELPFUL BOOKS

The following books are referred to in the various lessons under "Suggestions for Enlargement or Discussion" for Bible Class Teachers, and for convenience are listed here with names of publishers and prices:

According to My Gospel. Dr. Hugh Black. Revell, $1.25.
Assurance of Immortality. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Macmillan, $1.00.
Christianity and Social Problems. Dr. Lyman Abbott. Houghton-Mifflin, $1.25.
Christ of Christianity, The. Dr. James M. Stifler. Revell, $1.25.
Christ We Forget, The. P. Whitwell Wilson. Revell, $2.00.
Church We Forget, as Seen in The Acts, The Epistles, and The Apocalypse. P. Whitwell Wilson. Revell, $2.00.
Essays in Application. Dr. Henry van Dyke. Scribner's, $1.50.
Evangel of the Straight Gate, The. Dr. W. M. Clow. Doran, $1.35.
Everyman's Religion. Dean George Hodges. Macmillan, $1.50.
Fascination of the Book, The. Professor E. W. Work. Revell, $1.50.
First Century Message to Twentieth Century Christians. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan. Revell, $1.00.
Five Young Men. Dr. Charles R. Brown. Revell, $ .75.
Friendship. Dr. Hugh Black. Revell, $1.25.
Friendship the Master Passion. Dr. H. Clay Trumbull. Scribner's, $1.00.
Forgiveness of Sins. Dr. George Adam Smith. Doran, $1.00.
Gift of Influence, The. Dr. Hugh Black. Revell, $1.25.
Happiness. Dr. Hugh Black. Revell, $1.25.
Heart of Happiness, The. Rev. Percy C. Ainsworth. Revell, $1.00.
History of the Jewish Church, The. Vols. I and II. Dean Stanley. Scribner's, $3.75 a set.
Hope of the Gospel, The. Dr. J. D. Jones. Doran, $1.50.
Ideal Life, The. Henry Drummond. Dodd-Mead, $1.50.
In the Master's Country: a Geography of Palestine in the Time of Christ. Dr. Martha Tarbell. Doran, $ .50.
In the School of Christ. Bishop Wm. F. McDowell. Revell, $1.25.
Jesus of History, The. Professor T. R. Glover. Doran, $1.00.
Listening to God. Dr. Hugh Black. Revell, $1.00.
Master's Way, The. Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown. Pilgrim Press, $1.75.
Meaning of Prayer, The. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Association Press, $ .75.
New Starts in Life. Phillips Brooks. Dutton, $1.60.
Old Truths and New Facts. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson. Revell, $1.25.
Principles of Jesus. Dr. Robert E. Speer. Revell, $1.00.
Program of Christianity. Henry Drummond. Pott, $ .35.
Quiet Talks About the Tempter. Dr. S. D. Gordon. Revell, $1.00.
Quiet Talks on Following the Christ. Dr. S. D. Gordon. Revell, $1.00.
Quiet Talks on Prayer. Dr. S. D. Gordon. Revell, $1.00.
Representative Women of the Bible. George Matheson. Doran, $1.50.
Sermons for the Church Year. Phillips Brooks. Dutton, $2.00.
Shepherd of Jebel Nur, The. Dr. William Allen Knight, Pilgrim Press, $ .50.
Shepherd Song on the Hills of Lebanon, The. Faddoul Moghabghab. Dutton, $1.25.
Song of Our Syrian Guest, The. Dr. William Allen Knight. Pilgrim Press, $ .50.
Studies in the Parables of Jesus. Halford E. Luccock. Abingdon Press, $ .50.
Teachings of Jesus in Parables, The. George Henry Hubbard. Pilgrim Press, $1.50.
Temple and its Services, The. Alfred Edersheim. Revell, $1.00.
Things that Matter Most. Dr. J. H. Jowett. Revell, $1.50.
Tolstoi. Vol. XIV of Scribner's Edition. Sold in sets only.
Transfigured Church, The. Dr. J. H. Jowett, Revell, $1.50.
Under the Highest Leadership. Dr. John Douglas Adam. Association Press, $ .75.
Visions and Tasks. Phillips Brooks. Dutton, $2.00.

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1920

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Are We Making Good? During the war the first question of a wounded soldier upon awakening after some surgical operation was quite likely to be, "Did I make good?" His thoughts were not upon his injury but upon his record. He felt his individual responsibility for the result of the battle. And because our men knew it was "up to them to make good," we won our glorious victories.

As soldiers in God's army, do we feel the same sense of individual responsibility? Do we ask ourselves, "Am I making good as far as lies in my power? Am I doing my part in this time of the world's great need?" It is a new world of righteousness which we, the Sunday-school teachers of the world, must help to build. How our opportunity challenges every man and woman of us to our highest endeavor, calls for the giving of our best in time and talent in the task of moulding the lives of the youth of today who are to bring about the better day of tomorrow!

"Who would not have trembled to think what the manhood of Britain would have been without the work of these schools?" queried Principal Ritchie in an article in The Pilgrim Teacher written during the war. "Indeed, I have often felt that if only Germany had had Sunday-schools, those channels of the free Spirit of God, where men and women, untuned to state policies or ecclesiastical shibboleths, teach the things of Christ, this world catastrophe could never have taken place. Then Potsdam could never have made an empire drunk with a mad ambition, which, because God is not dead, could end only in disaster to itself and endless woe to the world."

To "Make Good" We Must Always Be Learners. Among the historic documents of the Brick Presbyterian Church of New York City is a manuscript sermon by Dr. Gardiner Spring, who was pastor of that church for more than fifty years. On the cover page is written the subject of the sermon, "The Nature of the Christian Atonement." At the top of the page is the date when the sermon was written, *"1828,"* and at the bottom of the page the observation, "All wrong, *1861.* Gardiner Spring."

Bible truths are ever the same, but a living, life-giving understanding and appropriation of these truths is ever changing, enlarging. Our faith is not identical with the faith we had as children, although it has grown out of that faith. A growing teacher does not have a closed mind. He seeks to gain the truest possible understanding of what God's Word means, whether the knowledge comes through a Revised Version with its more faithful translation of the original Hebrew and Greek, or through the researches made by archæologists with pick and spade in Bible lands, or through the discoveries made in careful study of the Bible text by modern scholars. Every day God's sun sheds new light upon his world, and every day God's prophets shed new light upon his Word. And with new views of truth must be coupled new views of duty, for the growing teacher is not like the pessimist of Ecclesiastes who declares that "That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done."

Library of

It is often taken for granted that the "experienced" teacher is necessarily the best teacher, but this by no means follows. To the experienced and the inexperienced teacher alike, Book and Pupil must be fresh and wonderful, methods of teaching must be bright and true and withal unstereotyped, and the preparation of each lesson, however familiar it may be, must be fresh and thorough. An experienced teacher who relies upon his already acquired knowledge of the lesson and upon teaching that lesson in the way he taught it a year ago or several years ago, is very far from being a good teacher. A good teacher is always a learner.

The Well-Prepared Lesson; General Preparation. Two kinds of preparation enter into every well taught lesson, a general and a specific. The extent to which the teaching is affected by the general preparation is seldom recognized. It is a truism that a lawyer attributes his success not alone to the time spent upon a specific case, but also to the time spent in learning how to take up that case; that a surgeon's fee is based not alone upon the time actually spent for a patient, but also upon the years of study and practice which made it possible for him to help that patient. And it is equally true that a teacher's success with a class depends not alone upon the hours given to the preparation of the special lessons, but also upon every study and every experience which increases his knowledge of the Book and of the Pupil. General preparation includes the study of the Bible as a whole, of the Books of the Bible in their entirety; the study of the science of the soul and its operations, or psychology; the study of the science and art of teaching, or pedagogy; and any study or experience which enriches the mind, elevates the soul, softens the heart. Experiences are lessons. "What I have lived I really know," writes Dr. Henry van Dyke.

No one who aims at achieving any serious end begrudges the time which must be spent in training. If you are to be a chauffeur or a musician or a man of business, you take your training. In Germany no one is allowed to be even a hairdresser who has not passed through a hairdressing school and received a certificate. Once it was thought that any one could be a farmer without previous training; now a young man who expects to make a success at farming enters an agricultural college. Once it was thought that Sunday-school teaching was a matter of so little moment that one required no preparation for it; now every true teacher spares no pains in preparing himself to achieve results.

There may be growth in knowledge of the science of teaching, and yet no growth in spiritual power. A Christian teacher must grow in both ways. In the words of Professor Weigle: "The teacher's knowledge of any particular lesson springs out of and in a sense reflects all that the teacher is and knows. Certainly a Sunday-school teacher's knowledge of any particular lesson does not depend simply upon his specific study of that one bit of material! It is rooted and grounded in the whole of his personal religious life and in the body of ideas that has come in his mind to underlie and express that life. Only that teacher who both is a Christian and knows why he is a Christian, who has a true and adequate knowledge of the Book as a whole and has thought through as well as lived through its teachings, will be sure to get the meaning of each lesson as it comes and to teach it with effectiveness and power."

A story which Dr. Frederick T. Shannon tells in The Breath of the Winds is applicable here. Reichel was conducting the final rehearsal of his great choir for the production of the Messiah. The chorus had sung through to the point where the soprano solo takes up the refrain, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The soloist's technique was perfect—she had faultless breathing, accurate note-placing, flawless enunciation. After the final note, all eyes were fixed upon Reichel to catch his look of approval. Instead, he silenced the orchestra, walked up to the singer with sorrowful eyes, and said: "My daughter, you do not really know that your Redeemer liveth, do you?" "Why, yes," she answered, flushing, "I think I do." "Then sing it!" cried Reichel. "Tell it to me so I and all who hear you will know, and know that you know the joy and power of it." Then he motioned the orchestra to play it again. And this time she sang the truth as she knew it in her own heart, sang it as she experienced it in her own soul, sang it with no thought of applause, sang it so gloriously that all who heard forgot the craftsman's work and wept under the spell of the singer's soul. Again the old master approached her, not with sorrowful eyes, but with joyous, tear-filled eyes, kissed her on the forehead, and said: "You do know, for you have told me." Our Master wants us to speak and live a like certitude.

The Well-Prepared Lesson: Specific Preparation. There are teachers, as Bishop Berry says there are preachers, who are brilliant in streaks, but the streaks are far apart! Who fire a hundred-pounder once a month or once in two months, and all the rest of the time play with firecrackers! It is not the occasional lesson, nor even the every-other-week lesson alone that should be thoroughly prepared. Nor is it only the special verses printed, but the entire lesson assigned that should be read and reread till it has been mastered.

There was a Pope once who justified universal butchery of Protestants by quoting, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat," from the vision of the apostle, one of our early lessons this year. A teacher is in no danger of wilful distortion of a lesson, but he is in danger of unintentional misinterpretation of a lesson, and still more in danger of missing the vital truth of a lesson unless he carefully studies the contributions of other minds to the theme in hand.

The specific preparation of a lesson should cover at least a week. You need to live some little time with a lesson truth to fully grasp it and to let it fully grasp you. In this way, too, from your daily paper, from the daily happenings of your world and of the world at large, you will glean illustrations which will bear with telling force upon the lesson truth.

The Well-Planned Lesson. Storing the mind with information about the lesson is not all there is to the preparation of the lesson. When you have gleaned facts, striking comments, illustrations, historical connection, geographical setting, oriental customs, etc., all bearing upon the lesson, your preparation is not complete. There must be a process of selection of material in hand. It is the lesson plan which conditions the selection. Your selected material will not fall of itself into its logical sequence: it is the lesson plan which conditions the order.

If you attempt to teach without a plan you will perforce wander aimlessly along in class, one thing calling up another, and the latter perchance calling to mind some irrelevant and therefore worse than futile observation which leads you far afield. Recall step by step the last lesson you have taught, and if you find that you were in any way guilty of rambling teaching, meditate upon this picture which Elijah P. Brown describes. Mr. Brown has a vision of a man preparing to cook his dinner on a prairie. The man starts a fire, on which he places his coffee-pot. He then puts some strips of bacon in a frying-pan and holds it over the fire beside the coffee-pot. But presently the grass takes fire, and the man follows it up with his frying pan, thinking it hotter farther on, but by the time his bacon is fried he is a quarter of a mile away from his coffee-pot! Don't ramble away from your coffee-pot!

"When I am speaking in court," declares a successful lawyer, "I always speak for a verdict." It is your lesson plan which makes possible the accomplishment of your aim. "What have you hit?" a boy asked a companion who had just fired a gun. "Oh," was the reply, "I have hit nothing; you see, I didn't aim at anything particular. But wasn't it a big bang! Just look at the smoke!" Doesn't that boy recall to your mind some teacher whom you have known?

It is the lesson plan which gives climax to your teaching. "He's dune lang syne, but he does no ken it," might be the comment upon many a teacher who does not plan his teaching. Without a plan he may reach his climax in the first ten minutes, and thereafter be "as one that beateth the air," giving haphazardly whatever chances to come to his mind of all that he has gleaned about the lesson. Thomas Bailey Aldrich says he always writes his last paragraph first, and then works directly up to that, avoiding all digressions and side issues. He has an aim that will not be sidetracked, and a plan that brings him directly to his goal.

Some one has said that there is hope for the teacher who gives a poor lesson but works on a good plan; but there is little hope for any teacher who has no plan. Have your plan and master it so that in teaching it will come to your mind without conscious effort.

The Well-Taught Lesson. "A teacher should be one who teaches," writes Miss Slattery. This is an axiomatic statement which can not too often be repeated. There are teachers who interest, teachers who entertain, teachers who make themselves beloved, teachers who stimulate, but of whom it can not be said that they are teachers who teach.

A thing is never given until it is accepted. This is axiomatic. Nothing is ever taught until it is learned. This, too, is axiomatic. A lesson has not been

well-taught by the teacher which has not been well-learned by the pupil. Where there has been no learning there has been no successful teaching.

A religious paper by a typographical error announced that a noted evangelist would hold meetings "successfully" in such and such cities. "Successively" was, of course, the word intended. But was not "successfully" correctly used, after all? Should one not expect to succeed in work for God for which he has fitted himself, for the reason that God is working through him? "You have a right to expect success in the teaching period if you have honestly prepared for it, for you are presenting the most vital subject in all the world, and God himself is concerned about the result."

The Final Test of a Well-Taught Lesson. There is but one thing which demonstrates the success of your teaching.

A missionary in India one day gave three native boys this lesson: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." He told the boys to learn it and when they had done so to report to him. A long time afterwards he met one of the boys who had been in the class and asked him why he had not reported. The boy said, "I have not yet learned the lesson."

The missionary was surprised. "Why," he replied, "the lesson is not difficult," and he repeated: "Whatsoever ye would," etc. But the boy interrupted, "O yes, yes, me can say it but me can't do it yet."

Successful teaching is demonstrated by right action on the pupil's part.

A small boy pointed to a long worm on the walk and exclaimed, "I wish I could kill them all dead—every one in all the world!" Whereupon his father taught him how useful such worms are, told him how they burrow under the ground, opening up passages for the air and water, loosening the ground so that the plant rootlets can easily push through it and suck up nourishment, and how if all the earthworms were killed the soil would become so dry and hard that fruits and vegetables could not grow. Suddenly the boy started off. "Where are you going?" asked the father. "I'm going to put that worm on a stick and carry him to the strawberry bed," replied the boy. "He might as well be working." That father had taught his lesson well.

A Word of Encouragement. To show that teachers should never despair over the visible results of spiritual endeavors, Dr. W. L. Watkinson gives this illustration:

During a visit to Johannesburg I spent a day at one of the gold mines. There was immense activity, there were gangs of workers, clouds of dust, hissing steam, deafening stamps, heaps of quartz, torrents of water and cauldrons of slime; but I came away without having seen a single speck of gold. The engineer touched the bottom of a turbid stream, and exclaimed, "There is a particle"; it was, however, as invisible to me as the same metal usually is on the collection plate. Yet, when on the return journey our ship anchored at Southampton, we discharged boxes of gold dust to the tune of a million. Thus today our evangelical work proceeds with noise of machinery, smoke and stir, sweat and blood, and a thousand things that are trivial and trying to the eye, but the practical spiritual gain is often depressingly dubious. The result is as sure as the law of harvest.

The First Quarter's Lessons. Bishop Francis Paget wrote concerning his son Bernard: "What I should desire for him would be first that he should sit down and listen to the Four Gospels, that he should have them slowly, quietly read to him; so that the picture, the form, the voice they bring before us might sink into his heart. And then I should like him to watch some one like your mother, or my father, or the Bishop of Lincoln, and see the strength and purity and gentleness and brightness that Christ works in a life simply set towards him."

That is the golden opportunity which our course of lessons offers to our pupils. During the Quarter just ended they have studied the Gospels, and the picture and voice of the Christ has, we trust, made a deep impression upon all hearts. Now as we watch Peter and John we shall see what effect upon them life with the Master has had, and how it has empowered them for their task.

For three months we have been following these two disciples, Peter and John, as they pursued their studies in the school of Christ. We saw how John the Baptist led them to make the acquaintance of Jesus and how Jesus asked them to follow him; how they sat at Jesus' feet and learned through his words and

went about with him and learned through his deeds. Two weeks ago we reached the end of the story of Jesus' training of these two, and now we turn to the first part of the Book of the Acts to see how they put their lessons into practice, how the disciples became apostles and carried on their Master's work. We shall make a great mistake if we teach this Quarter's lessons as a brief, independent course from the Book of Acts. They are a part of a six-months' course, the first half of which we have just completed.

Do you recall how Mark Rutherford says in Miriam's Schooling: "I know a man, now old and nearing his end, who one Sunday November afternoon, when he was but twenty years old, met a woman in a London street and looked into her face. Neither he nor she stopped for an instant; he looked in her face, passed on, and never saw her again. He married, had children, who now have children, but that woman's face has never left him, and the colors of the portrait which hangs in his soul's oratory are as vivid as ever. A thousand times has he appealed to it, a thousand times has it sat in judgment; and a thousand times has its sacred beauty redeemed him."

In our last lesson from the Gospels we read, "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," and that look redeemed forever the wayward and impetuous disciple. Peter, do you love me? we heard the Master questioning his disciple. Then you may live for me. Peter, do you love me? Then you may work for me. There was nothing that Peter more desired to do. And the early part of the Book of the Acts tells us how he obeyed.

The Second and Third Quarters' Lessons. With the Second Quarter we turn to the Old Testament for a six months' course. Let us not lose sight of the fact that in our eight year cycle of lessons our Old Testament studies are themselves continuous, though interrupted by lessons from the New Testament. During October, 1918, to March, 1919, we studied the lives of the Patriarchs and Early Leaders of Israel; from Abraham to the settlement in Canaan. Now we begin where we then left off and study the Early Leaders and Kings of Israel, the lives of the Judges, and of Kings Saul, David, and Solomon. When next we turn to the Old Testament we shall begin where we leave the history this year, and take up the Later Leaders and Prophets of Israel and Judah, from the Division of the Kingdom to the Close of the Old Testament.

At the beginning of this course of lessons, by questions hastily review the earlier history, the call of Abraham and his life in Canaan; the careers of Isaac and of Jacob and of Jacob's twelve sons, especially of Joseph, who preserved his race in Egypt; the call of Moses, who led his people out of Egypt; the life in the wilderness and the giving of the Law at Sinai; and the entering of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

The period of the Judges, where we begin our Old Testament studies this year, is the dark ages of Israel's history. The times are turbulent, there is no central government, the people sin and a foreign power conquers and oppresses them until a judge—a military leader—is raised up to free them. One lesson from the beautiful Book of Ruth shows us a bright contrast to the battle scenes. Then comes the work of Samuel, who was judge, prophet, and priest. We next study the period of the United Kingdom, the experimental stage of Saul's reign, and the brilliant reigns of David and Solomon. Two lessons from the Book of Psalms complete our Old Testament studies, that Book of which it has been said it contains the whole music of the heart of man, but it is the hand of God that sweeps the strings!

All pupils will be interested in following the development of the Hebrew nation from its rude beginnings in the time of the Judges to its place of prominence and power in the time of Solomon, but in teaching, the emphasis should not be upon the fortunes of the Israelites nor upon the large element in these lessons which belongs only to those far-distant times. Throughout this history of God's dealings with his Chosen People there are messages for all peoples and all times, and upon this universal element should the emphasis be placed.

"One thing only interests all human beings always," Mr. Arthur Brisbane affirms, "and that is the human being himself." Why does fiction make its appeal to people of all ages? Most will agree that it is because fiction lets its readers compare their own life story with that of its hero or heroine, lets them put themselves in the place of the various characters and wonder whether they would have said and done what the fictitious characters say and do. One newspaper correspondent declares that "The ideal article for any publication, as far

as 'reader interest' is concerned, would be one in which every reader could find his own name. The ideal illustration would be a group picture of all the readers, so that each reader could have the fun of finding himself in the picture."

In this respect as in many another, the Old Testament books are ideal writings. There is no lack of variety. Nothing is concealed. Our faults and failures are set before us as clearly as our virtues and successes. "Those who insist that the Bible is ancient history, and therefore of no concern to our day, beg the question," to quote from an article in the Philadelphia Ledger. "The same principles of human conduct under changed conditions are still operative. The face of the modern man looks out of pages describing Adam or Noah, Samson or David or Solomon. One can read of his own gnarled heathen heart in many a chapter. If the Bible described the perfect actions of ideal people it would be revered, perhaps, but it would not be generally read. It has taken hold of mortal consciousness because it bears witness to the truth."

At the University of Minnesota there is a garden where nothing but weeds are grown. More than two hundred and fifty varieties of weeds are cultivated. The weeds are carefully studied and the effort is made to find out upon what they thrive best, in order to know what opposite treatment would most quickly discourage their growth and spread. Many of our lessons during these six months are valuable for a similar purpose. Nowhere else shall we find more clearly demonstrated than in these Old Testament lessons that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

There is one error which all teachers may have occasion to guard their pupils against during these two Quarters' lessons, and that is the anachronism of carrying back into the religion of the ancient Israelites the religious truths of the Gospels. It should be a commonplace thought to every pupil that the Old Testament does not stand—save when at its best—upon the level of the Gospels.

The Fourth Quarter's Lessons. Here we have the first half of a six months' course in the Gospel according to Matthew. Are you glad to turn again to the study of the life of Jesus Christ? "I wish I could make our Christian friends understand," a worker in one of our camps wrote during the War, "how eagerly our men listen to the simple story of Christ, his life and teachings, and his willingness to become Companion and Friend."

In a chapter of his book entitled The Character of Jesus, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson gives the reason for his study. Let me condense for you here some of his statements with which every teacher will agree:

"Some of us have studied this man Jesus for many years. It is we who have the keenest desire to study him again. We shall find in him now things which we have never seen before. The eyes are always changing and the heart expands with the increase of the years. We climb to higher levels of knowledge through study and experience. The time will never come when we shall not relish the study of the life of Jesus. He is the way to God. He is the express image of the Father's Person. The more we study him the richer is our knowledge of the heart of God. He has declared the Father. The more fully we understand him the deeper we see into the heart of Deity. The ripest and most experienced Christians are readiest to accept the invitation, 'Come and see.'

"Some of us have studied his portrait only a little. Jesus is a name, but as a Person he is shadowy and unreal. His face has become obscured. Our heart does not feel his power. We are not indifferent to him, but we have no keen sense of loyalty to him, no purifying consciousness of adoration. We need to study him afresh. It may be that as we study him he will step out of the picture and take his place by our side. Not until we know him as a Comrade do we get from him all he has to give.

"Some of us have scarcely studied him at all. All we know we know by hearsay. We are prejudiced against this Jesus of Nazareth. His face has been distorted partly by the misrepresentations of others and partly by our own idiosyncrasies. It may be that during this study some of us shall see him for the first time as he is.

"I ask you to look at this portrait of Christ. Others are looking at it. They are looking at it all round the globe. Millions feel while looking at it that in this portrait they get the largest disclosures of the mind and purpose of the Eternal. It is indisputable that this portrait draws many hearts nearer to God. It may draw you. Only look at it. Other things are passing, but this portrait is a reality which abides."

"First be sure that you have not got a beam or mote in your own eye before you attempt a surgical operation on other people's eyes." "That's fine," said the man who heard another make this remark, "where did it come from?" If the man had heard this in a sermon, he would doubtless have recognized it at once as coming from the Sermon on the Mount. Like many another man, he thinks of the Word of God as good only for church and Sundays. A well-known educator asked her day-school pupils what heroes they most admired: Lincoln, Washington, etc., were quickly given, but only two thought of naming Christ. A few months later she asked those same pupils the same question in the Sunday-school, and thirty-two of them named Christ. They, too, associated Christ and religion with Sundays only. This year shall we not make sure that our pupils take Christ as the Guide of their *daily* lives? That adults realize that the Kingdom of God is built up only as righteousness is established in the shop and in the store, in the office and in the home, in the legislature and in the White House, as well as in the Church?

The Gospel according to Matthew is the Gospel of the Kingdom. During recent years our minds have been aroused to world thoughts: let us not only see in these lessons Jesus' concern for individual lives but let us also catch the broader vision of the universality of his work, and gain a knowledge of the principles by which he would have our lives guided in our relationship not only with our neighbors but with man the world over.

The Books in the Year's Course. To know the Bible as a whole, to know it in its historical aspect, and to have a systematic acquaintance with its documents is, as Matthew Arnold tells us, "a great affair." As we take up different books from year to year, older pupils should gain this systematic acquaintance with them. A student of Shakespeare knows the plots of each drama, is greatly interested in its characters, understands its philosophy of life, admires the diction in which its thoughts are clothed, recognizes its words in a quotation, and quotes correctly passage after passage appropriate to the daily happenings of life. Should a student of the Bible know less about its great books? Should he not be equally versed in its varied contents? Should not its patriarchs, kings and prophets, be his old familiar friends? Should not the history or the poetry or the philosophy and the religion of each book be equally distinct in his mind? Should he not be able to recognize at once the direction of a prophet's thought or the turn of an Evangelist's phrase?

When a new book of the Bible is taken up in our lessons, spend a few minutes at the beginning in giving your pupils a bird's eye view of the book as a whole. And week by week add to their knowledge of the book. The information which follows in this Introduction may be dictated, a paragraph or two at a time, and copied by your pupils in a note-book.

If pupils understand the purpose of the writers of a Biblical book they will better understand the book itself, for

> "A book, though mainly as the writer makes it,
> Is also largely as the reader takes it."

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Title. The full title—The Book of the Judges—is found in the Syriac Version. The book is so called because it recounts the deeds of those early leaders of Israel who were raised up from time to time to save their people from annihilation at the hands of foes.

These leaders were not judges in the sense that we use the title: they were rather occasional champions, deliverers, dictators. The judges were principally leaders in warfare; after peace was attained, they are said to have "judged Israel" for a number of years, but we are told nothing about the extent or nature of their authority. The title indicates that the ruler was not regal, yet that he was higher than the mere head of the tribe or the mere judge of special cases. Dean Stanley explains that *Shophet*, the Hebrew word which we translate *Judge*, is the same as we find in the *Suffes* of the Carthaginian rulers at the time of the Punic Wars, and as afterward the office of King was taken from the nations round about, so now, if not the office, at least the name of Judge, or *Shophet*, seems to have been drawn from the Canaanite cities, with

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which for the first time Israel came into contact. It is the first trace of the influence of Syrian usages on the fortunes of the Chosen People.

Authorship and Date. The book is a collection of ancient records. The formal framework repeated with the story of each judge (see the outline, below) is the wording of the one who incorporated in one book the grand old stories of the early heroes which had been told by father to son for generations in Canaan. Four times we read that "in those days there was no king in Israel"; evidently, then, the collection was made at the later time when there were kings in Israel. Whoever the compiler was, he had a mighty faith in God as the Maker of history.

The chronology of the book is obscure. It gives the duration of the various judgeships, and united they make four hundred and ten years, but their times probably overlapped, each judge ruling in his district only. The round numbers given for each of the greater judges (40, 80, 40, 40, 20) probably were not intended to be exact, since the sum total does not agree with the statement in 1 K. 6.1, which assigns 480 years to the entire period between the Exodus and the building of the Temple.

Our ideas of chronological exactness were unknown in those ancient times. They are still uncommon among oriental peoples. A French statistician once wrote to the vali of Aleppo and asked these four questions: "What are the imports of Aleppo? What is the water supply? What is the birth-rate? The death-rate?" The vali replied: "It is impossible for anyone to know the number of camels that kneel in the markets of Aleppo. The water supply is sufficient: no one ever died of thirst in Aleppo. The mind of Allah alone knows how many children shall be born in this vast city at any given time. As to the death-rate, who would venture to ascertain this, for it is revealed only to the angels of death who shall be taken and who shall be left. O Son of the West, cease your idle and presumptuous questionings, and know that these things are not revealed to the children of men."

The Exodus (forty years before the entrance into Canaan under Joshua) is now dated about 1250 B. C. and the accession of David as king about 1017 B. C. The period covered by the Book of Judges may have been less than two centuries, perhaps a century and a half.

The Times. In the Book of Joshua we are told about the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, the first stages in their conquest of the land, the allotment of territory among the five tribes, and Joshua's farewell address. The Book of Judges continues the history of the Israelites from the last days of Joshua through the last days of Samson, that free, wild, stirring, pioneer period during which the foundations for the future nation were being laid.

At the beginning of the history we find the Israelites living with their enemies, the Canaanites, in a half conquered land. "Now these are the nations which Jehovah left, to prove Israel by them," 3.1. Like Bedouin robbers, the Canaanites made frequent sallies into Israelite territory, and the Israelites lived in constant expectation of attack. Moses and Joshua had been great enough to hold the tribes together, but now the tribes were scattered, there was no central government, and there were no real leaders much of the time. As a rule, each tribe waged its own warfare with the native inhabitants. Jealousy was rife among the tribes, and nothing like concerted action among them is seen save in the great crisis which called forth Deborah and Barak. It was a rude age this, whose lawlessness is especially seen in the closing chapters of the book, a time when "there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

The Israelites were desert nomads when they entered the land of Canaan, and during the time of the Judges they were not only making themselves masters of the land but they were learning from their Canaanite neighbors the arts of agricultural life, and they were gradually working toward tribal consolidation. At the same time the religion as well as morals of the Canaanites entered into the life of Israel, for it was at this period that the Israelites were introduced to the old sanctuaries and sacred places of Canaan, and learned the corrupting forms of worship of the Baal, the Canaanite gods.

Contents of the Book. It falls naturally into three divisions, an introductory section, the body of the book, and an appendix.

The introduction duplicates, in general, the statements that are scattered through Joshua 15, 16, 17 and 19, events which occurred during Joshua's lifetime,

the introductory clause "And it came to pass after the death of Joshua" being added probably by a later hand to connect the two books: moreover, 2.6-10 is an account of the death of Joshua, duplicating Joshua 24.29-33.

The body of the book narrates the deeds of the Judges, and this is the outline of each story: sin, punishment, appeal, deliverance, peace. Apostasy, disobedience to Jehovah, is followed by oppression, subjection to enemies; a shallow repentance ensues and a judge is raised up to deliver the people and secure peace for a number of years, until they again worship the gods of their heathen neighbors.

The stories in the appendix refer to an earlier period than the close of section II, one of the characters mentioned being a grandson of Moses and another of Aaron.

The Outline.

I. Introduction. 1.1 to 3.6.
   1. Victories of Judah (Caleb their Leader), Simeon and Joseph. 1.1-28.
   2. Districts which Israel Was not Able to Conquer, and the Reason therefor. 1.27 to 2-5.
   3. Retrospect: Allegiance to Jehovah under Joshua; Joshua's death. 2. 6-10.
   4. Preview: an Epitome of the Period of the Judges. 2:11-19.
   5. List of the Nations Left to Prove Israel. 2.20 to 3.6.

II. Stories of the Judges. 3.7 to 16.31.
   1. Apostasy, Punishment at the Hands of the King of Mesopotamia, Deliverance under Nathaniel as Judge. 3.7-11.
   2. Apostasy, Punishment at the Hands of the King of Moab, Deliverance under Ehud as Judge; Philistine Oppressions, Shamgar the Deliverer. 3.12-31.
   3. Apostasy, Punishment at the Hands of Jabin, King of Canaan, and Sisera, his Captain; Deliverance under Deborah as Judge and Barak as Captain. Chapters 4 and 5.
      a, Song of Deborah. Chapter 5 .
   4. Apostasy, Punishment at the Hands of the Midianites, and Deliverance under Gideon as Judge. 6.1 to 8.32.
      a, The Sign of the Fleece, 6.33-40; b, The Choice of the Three Hundred, 7.1-8; c, The Cake of Barley Bread, 7.9-14; d, Trumpets and Pitchers, 7.15-22.
   5. Apostasy, Punishment from within at the Hands of Abimelech; Death of Abimelech; Later Deliverance under Tola and Jair. 8.33 to 10.5.
      a, Jotham's Fable. 9.7.20.
   6. Apostasy, Punishment at the Hands of the Ammonites, Deliverance under Jephthah; Minor Judges—Ibzan, Elon, Abdon. 10.6 to 12.15.
      a, Jephthah's Vow. 11.30-40.
   7. Apostasy, Punishment at the Hands of the Philistines, "Beginning" (13. 5) of Deliverance under Samson as Judge. Chapters 13 to 16.
      a, Samson's Riddle, 14.5-20; b, His Feat with the Foxes, 15.1-8; c, His Feat with New Ropes, 15.9-14; d, His Feat with the Jawbone of an Ass, 15.15-16; e, His Feat with the Gate of Gaza, 16.3; f, His Death, 16.21-30.

III. Appendix. Chapters 17 to 21.
   1. Micah and his Idols, Migration of the Danites and the Establishment of the Sanctuary at Dan. Chapters 17 and 18.
   2. Feud between the Tribes of Benjamin and the Rest of the Israelites. Chapters 19 to 21.

As Literature. "For merely human interest, for the lively touches of ancient manners, for the succession of romantic incidents, for the tragic pathos of events and characters, there is nothing like the history of the Judges," declares Dean Stanley.

Intensely interesting are the vigorous stories, with their varied and thrilling scenes. The story of Gideon has been declared the equal in force and beauty of any episode in the epic poems of Greece. Then there is Ehud plunging his dagger into the unsuspicious king Eglon; the lion-hearted Deborah delivering her judgments beneath her palm tree: the great Sisera lying dead in Jael's tent, slain by the hand of a woman; the crowds of Ephraimites slain at the fords of the Jordan because they cannot say Shibboleth; Jephthah's daughter coming

forth to meet her father with timbrel and dance, and striking agony into his heart; the grim humor and merry exploits of the giant Samson.

Dr. Lyman Abbott was once lecturing on political reform in one of our great cities. He took out his pocket Bible, remarking, "I have here an old book which is a favorite with me," and proceeded to read Jotham's Parable of the Trees from the Book of Judges. Two gentlemen on the platform afterwards asked what the book was, from which he had read, and one of the men was a judge. Jotham's Parable and Deborah's Song—these are literary gems.

Deborah's Song of Triumph is generally believed the oldest specimen of Hebrew poetry extant. It shows the vindictive, relentless spirit of primitive people, but it also breathes forth a passionate love for Israel and for Israel's God. It is one of the finest odes of the world's literature, beautiful in its impetuous style and its vivid imagery. From some of its passages Macaulay drew inspiration for his "Horatius."

Lessons for Today. Judges was written to illustrate and enforce spiritual truth rather than to record history. Although the rude life which the Israelites led was utterly different from our own, and their knowledge of the nature of God was far inferior to ours, their religious ideas being primitive and their morality low, yet the book has many forceful lessons for us in these days of greater knowledge and privilege.

It throws a lurid light upon the fearful conditions that exist when every man is a law unto himself, living with no regard to the Divine Ruler of men. One leading lesson in the book is that

> Righteousness exalteth a nation;
> But sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14.34).

Instead of "reproach" take here the root meaning of the Hebrew word, which is "bends the neck." Over and over again we see the apostasy of the people followed by their enslavement: sin bends their neck to a conqueror.

"The punishment of God is poetic," writes Dr. Morgan. "That which fell upon these people was the necessary result of their own sin. They bent their neck to low ideals of religion, and were compelled to bend the neck to the rule of the people to whose immorality they had stooped. God visited them by bringing upon them the scourge of an idolatrous people, because they had stooped to idolatry." The warning is needed for nations now as well as then: righteousness still exalts a nation and sin still brings it low.

> The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard,
> And delivered them out of their troubles (Ps. 34.17).

A second dominant lesson is that God is not only just, he is also merciful, and ready to pardon. The punishment brought the people to a realization of their sin and of their need of God. "Jehovah is seen watching and waiting in mercy for his people, hearing them the moment they cry to him, and answering them immediately with deliverance. It is a story, on the human side, of disobedience and disaster; and on the Divine side, of direction and deliverance."

"It is the history of the Church throughout the ages, with Luther, Knox, Wesley as deliverers," writes Dr. John Weaver Weddell. "It is the biography of the Christian in the common run of lives. God gives us great grace and sets before us a great and gracious task. Then comes forgetfulness of God, which brings defeat and loss, but, thank God, also, with penitence, comes rescue from loss and restoration to God's favor."

Thus the two chief lessons of the book may be summed up in one sentence: None should presume, for God is just; none need despair, for God is merciful.

And there are many other lessons for us in the book. God finds his co-workers in what we would deem unlikely places; he chooses men whom we would think unsuited to be his messengers; he finds the right man at the right moment; his is the guiding hand in history; religion, patriotism and national strength can not be disassociated; racial animosity and greed are punished; high courage and wonderful faith are needed.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The Title. The book derives its name from its heroine. It is one of the five short writings called by the Jews *Megilloth* or *Rolls,* and is fittingly read in their synagogues on the Feast of Pentecost, the great Harvest Festival of the

Jewish Calendar. In the ancient editions of the Hebrew Scriptures it was always joined with the Book of Judges.

Authorship and Date. In the book the story is all-engrossing and one gives no thought to the writer. There is no hint in the Bible as to who may have written it, and the date of its writing can only be conjectured. That it was written at a much later date than that of the events narrated is seen from the first verse, which tells us that the period of the Judges lay far behind, and from the explanations given of customs. Ruth 4.7 speaks of a practice as "the custom in former times in Israel," and the presupposition of the whole fourth chapter is that the customs there recorded had long been obsolete. The last verses were certainly written long after Ruth's death. It is an interesting supposition that the book was written in the time of Ezra, as a protest against his rigorous measures demanding the divorce of all foreign wives, for Ruth the Moabitess becomes an Israelite indeed, with faith enough to adopt Israel's God as her God, and deemed by God worthy of being the ancestress of Israel's greatest king.

The events of the book were enacted "in the days when the judges judged," 1.1. Josephus places it in the time of Eli, the priest and judge whose story is given in the early chapters of First Samuel, doubtless from the fact that David was Ruth's great-grandson.

The appendix of Judges, chapters 17 to 21, illustrates the period of the Judges in its wild scenes of bloodshed; Ruth illustrates the period from a happy point of view, giving us a glimpse of the pastoral and domestic life, and having an office in the Bible, as Armstrong Blake says, "not unlike that which God has given the flowers in the world of nature; it softens, it sweetens, it soothes."

Contents. The book opens with famine and tears, and ends with the sound of wedding-bells. The story, which is told with so much charm and tenderness, is briefly this: Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, is driven by famine to settle in the land of Moab with his wife Naomi and their two sons. A few years pass, Elimelech dies, the two sons marry Ruth and Orpah, women of Moab, and the sons die. Naomi decides to return home, and Ruth resolves to accompany Naomi, leaving her own land and kin and clinging to the older woman with unselfish, true-hearted devotion. In Bethlehem Ruth gleans in the harvest fields, for Naomi is poor and she must obtain food for them both, and her piety wins the favor of God and of men. Boaz, the wealthy landowner in whose field she works, is a kinsman of Elimelech, and Naomi devises a plan by which Boaz chooses Ruth for his wife. Ruth and Naomi live happily with Boaz, and in becoming the ancestress of the great King David Ruth's fidelity receives a high reward.

In the course of the narrative we are given delightful glimpses of tribal customs. The primitive instruments used in harvesting, the men and maidens working cheerfully together in the fields, the kindly concern of the owner of the fields for his workers, the rights and obligations of the nearest of kin to a dead relative's widow, the removal of the shoe in token of the waiving of rights and claims, the judgment delivered in the gate before the elders—all speak eloquently of that far-away time when life was very simple.

The Outline.

I. The Great Choice. 1.1-18.
   1. In the Far Country. 1.1-5.
   2. Ruth's Great Choice. 1.6-18.

II. The Time of Poverty. 1.19 to 4.12.
   1. The Home-coming in Bethlehem. 1.19-22.
   2. Ruth Gleaning in the Field of Boaz. Chapters 2 and 3.
   3. Boaz Redeeming Elimelech's Inheritance. 4.1-12.

III. The Time of Plenty. 4.13-22.
   1. Ruth Married to Boaz, and Birth of Obed. 4.13-17.
   2. Obed the Ancestor of David. 4.17-22.

As Literature. A great poet, when asked why he did not write a poem upon the story of Ruth, replied, "I dare not, lest I mar that which is already perfect." That the Book of Ruth is the greatest pastoral idyl in all literature is the judgment of all who are competent to judge it. Goethe calls it "The liveliest little epic and idyllic whole which has ever come down to us," and a later critic says that "It is a wonderful prose poem, sweet, artless and persuasive, touched with the quaintness of an older world and fresh with the scent of the harvest fields." When Benjamin Franklin was our minister to France, he read the book at a

social gathering one evening; his hearers expressed their delight in its charming simplicity and eagerly inquired in what book this idyl could be found.

Lessons for Today. Love plays a great part in human life, and the constancy and heroism and unselfishness of one woman's love for another has no greater illustration in all literature than in Ruth's love for Naomi. Love is kind, as Paul says, and the lovingkindnesses of Ruth the Moabitess for Naomi; and the lovingkindness of Boaz the wealthy Israelite for Ruth the penniless wife of his dead kinsman, "set us a pattern how we ought to live," teach us the art of being kind.

And there are other lessons for us in Ruth's story besides that of the strength and unselfishness and constancy of her devotion to Naomi. We see in Ruth the deference of youth to age, the readiness of her vow to follow Naomi's God, the faithfulness with which she kept that vow, the splendidness of her courage in facing the struggle of earning a living. We see in Naomi her loyalty to God through all her sorrows which she bore without rebelling, her unselfishness in wishing her daughters-in-law to choose what seemed to be for their best interest, her winsomeness which made Ruth want Naomi's God to be her God. We see in Boaz his kindly regard for the welfare of his laborers, his care for the stranger within his gates, his large-heartedness and courtesy, his readiness to assume the responsibility of the next-of-kin, his loyalty to the law of his people.

The Book of Ruth has a special message for this land where so many aliens have sought a home, for it is a protest against the contempt of the immigrant—here too commonly expressed.

Like the Book of Jonah, the Book of Ruth claims the whole world for the love of God. Ruth was a Moabitess, and it was not her birth but her faith that counted. "Through her choice of the ideals of the Jews and her acceptance of the Jewish faith," as Bishop Bashford points out, "Ruth was incorporated into the Jewish nation; and a Moabitess, the child of an outlawed nation, became the grandmother of the noblest king of Israel and the ancestress of our Lord. The brief story of Ruth, who in her sorrow turned to the God of the universe for comfort, is the inspired effort to teach the Jews that their God is no tribal divinity, but the God and Father of us all. The Book of Ruth was inspired by the Holy Spirit to reveal the universal and missionary character of the Old Testament religion."

Matthew Arnold gives as the lasting value of the book "its design to lead to Providence, to show us how conversant it is about our private concerns, and to teach us in them all to have eye to it, acknowledging God in all our ways, and in all events that concern us."

And then there is the special lesson of the close of the book. I give it in Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's words: "The value to God of that life which makes the great surrender, and follows him in faith, the value of such a life can never be known until we pass within the veil. Remember the sequence with which this book closes: Obed, Jesse, David. Boaz and Ruth had passed into the light ere David came, the king for whom the nation was waiting, yet the sequence did not end with David. A little later a prophet from some height of vision broke into a great song. 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.' Far down the centuries there shone a light at midnight, and songs were heard, and in the direct line of the man of Judah and of privilege, and the woman of Moab and of limitation, to Bethlehem came the King."

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL AND KINGS

Why we Have Two Books Each of Samuel and Kings. The earliest translation from the Hebrew into the Greek was the Septuagint Version, and in this translation two scrolls were required, where only one had been necessary in the original Hebrew, because written Greek requires far more space than written Hebrew, and the scrolls were of limited length. Our English translations follow the Septuagint Version, although now the only reason for dividing the book is for convenience of reference.

The Writers. The books themselves give no information as to the writers, although they mention an official recorder, or chronicler. The Books of Kings emphasize the fact that they are compilations by frequently referring to annals

which have not come down to us. In the Books of Samuel there is but one reference to other records, 2 S. 1.18, but the duplicate accounts of the same events—in First Samuel there are three accounts of one event—accounts which are similar in essentials but are given in different words and usually in somewhat different settings, and at times with apparently conflicting statements, indicate that these books, too, are a compilation from several sources. Among these are the two accounts of David's magnanimity toward Saul, of David's sojourn among the Philistines and departure from them, and of the death of Saul.

How the Books Were Written. At the time that the events of the Civil War took place, much was written about it, and men who knew Lincoln wrote their estimation of him and recorded his sayings and deeds. Since then, biographers who had no personal knowledge of the War, and who never saw Lincoln, have written Lives of Lincoln, each from his own point of view. They went to "the original sources," as we call the records made at the time of the events, and from them selected the facts and incidents they wished to use for the purpose they had in mind; these they rewrote in their own words, and added their own thoughts in the way of explanations, inferences and deductions. If they had incorporated in their biographies the exact words of the original records, without quotation marks and without credit, and had welded them together with words of their own, they would have done what the Hebrew historians appear to have done who prepared the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles.

Their Purposes. The Jews placed the historical books, from Joshua to Kings, in the section of the Old Testament known as The Prophets, thereby indicating that their history is written from the prophetic standpoint, the ideas and principles and illustrations, not the facts, being the chief interest. These historical books are histories written with a religious purpose. The writers have recorded events in the life of the nation and of individuals that show the growth and the decay of the Hebrew kingdom, and they have interpreted these events, revealing God's controlling hand through them all. There are two ways of writing history: "You can either leave God out," as Dr. Alexander Maclaren tells us, "or you can trace all things to him. The former way calls itself 'scientific' and 'positive.' The latter is the Bible way. Perhaps, if modern history were written on the same principle as the Books of Kings, the Divine hand would be as plainly visible—only it requires an inspired historian to do it." The inspired historians of these books have given us what Browning calls "the spiritual life around the earthly life."

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

The Title. While the greater part of the Books of Samuel is devoted to Saul and David, they are called by the name of Samuel doubtless because the history of Samuel occupies the principal part of the early chapters, and he is a prominent character later, having anointed both Saul and David, his successors as leaders of the people.

The Date. Those who believe the books to be a compilation assign 700 B. C. as about the date in which they were edited as we now have them.

Contents.

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfills himself in many ways,

are Tennyson's words which aptly befit the message of the Books of Samuel. They tell of the change in government and of the establishment of the monarchy. Beginning during the judgeship of Eli, they narrate the history of God's dealings with the Israelites under the leadership of Samuel, Saul, and David, ending with the close of David's life, a period of about one hundred years. At the beginning Israel is the collection of scattered tribes of which we read in the Book of Judges: at the close Israel is an important nation.

Outline of the Books.

I. The Early Life and Judgeship of Samuel. 1 S. 1-7.
   1. Birth, Childhood, and Vision of Samuel. 1.1 to 3.21.
   2. Defeat of Israel by the Philistines and Death of Eli. 4.1-22.
   3. The Ark Captured, Held, and Restored. 5.1 to 7.2.
   4. The Victory over the Philistines. 7.3-17.

II. The Reign of Saul. 1 S. 8 to 31.
1. Circumstances Leading to the Choice of Saul as King. Chapters 8 to 10.
2. Saul's Conquest of the Ammonites. Chapter 11.
3. Samuel's Address. Chapter 12.
4. Saul's and Jonathan's Wars with the Philistines and Saul's Rejection. Chapters 13 to 15.
5. David Anointed. 16.1-13.
6. David at Court and his Victory over Goliath. 16.14 to 17.58.
7. Saul's Jealousy and Pursuit of David. 18.1 to 27.4.
8. David at Ziklag, Battle of Mount Gilboa, and Death of Saul. 27.5 to 31.13.

III. The Reign of David. 2 S. 1 to 24.
1. David Mourning for Saul and Jonathan. Chapter 1.
2. David Made King. Chapters 2 to 5.
3. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem. Chapter 6.
4. David's Wish to Build the Temple. Chapter 7.
5. David's Victories. Chapters 8 to 10.
6. David's Sin. Chapters 11 and 12.
7. Absalom's Vengeance and Rebellion. Chapters 13 to 18.
8. David's Return to Jerusalem and Revolt of Sheba. Chapters 19 and 20.

IV. An Appendix. Chapters 21 to 24.
1. Famine and Atonement. War with the Philistines. Chapter 21.
2. David's Psalm of Thanksgiving. Chapter 22.
3. List of David's Mighty Men. Chapter 23.
4. Numbering of the People. Chapter 24.

As Literature. When John Fiske the historian was a lad his pastor asked him one day what he was going to do when he became a man. "I am going to grow up and write a book like Samuel's," said the future historian. The boy's literary sense had been awakened by the strong, picturesque narratives of the Books of Samuel, and to them he doubtless owed much of his ability to portray American history so vividly.

In these books the stories of Eli and Samuel, of Saul and David and Absalom, are told with so much detail that they read rather like a series of biographies than like history, and they rank among the literary masterpieces of the world. Viscount Bryce says of them: "They have a vivid quality that modern pens cannot produce. When a man of today tries to reproduce the fresh and direct simplicity of these early narratives, he is almost inevitably drawn into a conscious old-fashioned-ness or preciosity. He is not natural, but archaic."

The early chapters were the delight of Luther's heart; with unwonted tenderness he would read and re-read them, for to turn from his own strenuous and turbulent activities to the child Samuel "ministering before Jehovah" was a restful change. The tragic life of Saul—chosen, found wanting, rejected, maddened, eclipsed—is told with fascination and power. And as for the life of David—"it would be difficult to overpraise the literary and historical genius of the writer who traces the checkered course of David's reign." The writer rarely expresses a judgment, but he shows great literary skill in the way he gives us an insight into the springs of character. Gems of purest ray are David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan, and Nathan's parable of "Thou art the Man."

Lessons for Today. "As I watch the movement of this story, gathering around the three central figures, Samuel, Saul and David, the supreme revelation is not of these men, but of Jehovah reigning by the adaptation of his method to the requirements of the hour, and so through disobedience or obedience, through success or failure, through men loyal or rebellious, moving quietly, steadily, and surely on. This book inspires a great song, which can best be uttered in the words of the Psalmist, 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice!'"

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

The Title. First and Second Kings are thus called because they cover that part of Israel's history in which the Kings reigned. They mention all the Kings of Israel save Saul, the first King.

The Date. It is believed that First Kings was written in Judah before the Exile, perhaps about 600 B. C.

Its Contents. The close connection of the four Books of Samuel and Kings is shown by the title given them in the Septuagint Version of "The First, Second, Third and Fourth Books of the Kingdom." The First Book of Kings continues the history where the Second Book of Samuel leaves it. The title of the Syriac Version reads: "Here follows the Book of the Kings who flourished among this ancient people; and in it is also exhibited the history of the prophets who flourished in their time."

The First Book of Kings begins with David in his feeble old age, records the splendor of Solomon's reign, and continues with the history of the two kingdoms which arose at his death until Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah and Ahaziah's reign over Israel. Its chief heroes are King Solomon and the prophet Elijah.

The Outline.

I. The Last Days of David and the Reign of Solomon. 1 K. 1.1 to 11.43.
   1. The Passing of David. 1.1 to 2.11.
   2. The Greatness of Solomon. 2.11 to 4.54; 10.1-29.
   3. The Building and Dedication of the First Temple. 5.1 to 9.28.
   4. Solomon's Apostasy, Adversaries, and Death. 11.1-43.

II. The History of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel from the Disruption to the Reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah. 12.1 to 22.53.
   1. Rehoboam in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel. 12.1 to 14.31.
   2. Abijam and Asa in Judah. 15.1-24.
   3. Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri in Israel. 15.25 to 16.28.
   4. Ahab's Reign in Israel. 16.29 to 22.40.
      a. The Prophet Elijah at Cherith, at Zarephath, at Mount Carmel, and at Horeb. 17.1 to 19.21.
      b. Defeat of Benhadad. 20.
      c. Ahab, Jezebel, Naboth and Elijah. 21.
   5. Jehoshaphat's Reign in Judah and Ahaziah's Reign in Israel. 22.41-53.

As Literature. In the first half of the book the scenes connected with David's assuring the throne to Solomon and the visit to Solomon of the Queen of Sheba are told most vividly. The splendid glitter of Solomon's reign is clearly portrayed, but the record does not show us Solomon the man as the Second Book of Samuel discloses David's inner life. The brief, formal summaries of the Kings of Israel and Judah which follow—good kings and bad kings, kings who worshipped Jehovah and kings who thought Jehovah and the Baalim might be worshipped side by side—are monotonously given, but the narratives from the life of Elijah, the stern prophet who appears unexpectedly at critical moments, are graphic and stirring, told with fine dramatic power.

Lesson for Today. The one main lesson which the narrative of the Books of Kings is meant to teach, Canon Farrar points out, is absolute faith and trust in God as an anchor which holds amid the wildest storms of ruin and of apparently final failure. It shows us that duty is the reward of duty, and that there can be no happiness save for those who have learned that duty and blessedness are one. And thus even by this book of annals—annals of wild deeds and troubled times—we may be taught the truths which find their perfect illustration and proof in the life and teaching of the Son of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

The Meaning of the Word Gospel. The word *Gospel* is derived from the two Anglo Saxon words *god*, good, and *spell*, story or tidings—*god-spell, gospel, good tidings.* The good news concerning Jesus the Son of God is given us by four writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The Synoptic Gospels. The first three Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels, the words meaning literally *the Gospels which may be viewed together.* Two-thirds of Mark is common to both Matthew and Luke, and one-third is common to either Matthew or Luke. About a century ago J. J. Greisbach first arranged these three Gospels systematically in parallel columns, so that their common parts could be seen at a glance. This arrangement he called a synopsis,

and since then these Gospels have been fittingly called the Synoptic Gospels. The Fourth Gospel has so little in common with these three that it cannot be thus arranged with them.

The Sources of the Gospel According to Matthew. According to the Early Fathers (those in authority in the Early Church), the earliest written record of Christ's life was a collection of his sayings called the *Logia* (Sayings, Discourses) of Matthew, written in Aramaic, the Hebrew dialect spoken in Palestine in the time of Christ. Eusebius quotes from Papias (about 140 A. D.) that "Matthew composed the Logia in the Hebrew dialect, but each one interpreted them as he was able."

The earliest manuscripts of the Gospel according to Matthew that have come down to us are in Greek, and date from the fourth century, some three hundred years after the Gospel was written. Most scholars believe that in these Greek manuscripts (of which our Gospel is a translation), the Gospel according to Mark was used as the framework and into it were inserted other authentic records, written or oral, including the Aramaic Matthew or Logia.

The Writer of the Gospel According to Matthew. In the oldest manuscripts the four Gospels were bound together under the title "The Gospel," and each one received its special heading of "According to Matthew," etc. The headings were not part of the books themselves, but were the titles given them in the early lists of lessons to be read in the churches. The heading "The Gospel according to Matthew" may mean either the Gospel written by Matthew or the Gospel written by one whose chief authority was Matthew.

Matthew was a Palestinian Jew, and at the time when called by Jesus to be his disciple was a publican, the official tax-collector at Capernaum of the Roman Empire. His name occurs in all the lists of the apostles, though Mark and Luke give his other name of Levi. Being an apostle, he was an eye-witness of the events his Gospel narrates. Aside from the account of his call and the reference to the banquet which he gave his Master (Lk. 5.27-30), nothing further is definitely known about him. Tradition says that he preached fifteen years in Judea and then in Ethiopia, Persia, Media and Parthia. Eusebius (270-340 A. D.) writes that "Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel in writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence."

Whether Matthew the publican wrote the original Greek Matthew or only the Aramaic Matthew cannot now be determined.

When and for Whom Matthew was Written. Matthew's Gospel was written for the Jews and it is therefore fittingly placed first; to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles is the order of divine revelation. It takes for granted that the course of events is known to its hearers and contains special Jewish phrases such as "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," "the holy city." It gives those teachings which have for the Jews a particular significance: here only do we hear of Jesus' words concerning the permanence of the Law (5.17-19); the limitation of the mission of Jesus and his apostles to the Jews (10.6; 15.24); Jesus' severest words denouncing the Pharisees (15.13; 21.28-32; and chapter 23); and his declaration of the nation's downfall (8.11, 12; 21.43; 22.7; 27.25). It has been called the ultimatum of Jehovah to his people; Recognize Jesus as your Messiah, or accept him as your Judge! Very appropriately St. Thomas Aquinas prefixed to his Gospel of Matthew Isaiah 40.9: "Upon the high mountain get thee up, thou that preachest the Gospel to Sion; lift up thy voice in strength, thou that preachest the Gospel to Jerusalem; lift it up, and be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah: Behold your God; behold, the Lord God will come in strength and his arm will rule; behold, his reward is with him."

The date of the Gospel cannot be more definitely determined than that it was written later than the Gospel of Mark, which is assigned to the years between 60 and 70 A. D. Irenæus (first century) says: "Matthew among the Hebrews published a Gospel in their own dialect, when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome and founding the Church."

Its Aim. No Gospel aims to be a complete biography of Jesus. From the sources at command each Evangelist selected and arranged the material best suited for the purpose he had in writing it.

Matthew's main purpose was to convince his readers that Jesus is the Messiah. The Old Testament closes with the chosen nation looking for their long-promised

King and Messiah. Matthew's Gospel shows that Jesus was that King, the one who fulfilled ancient prophecy—the Messiah. It is the Gospel of the Fulfilment: what Isaiah and Jeremiah and Zechariah and Daniel said about the King and his Kingdom are here noted as fulfilled in Jesus. The phrase *that it might be fulfilled* occurs many times, and there are sixty-five quotations from the Old Testament.

Matthew's object was not only to give trustworthy proof that he whom the Jews had rejected is really the Messiah of their nation, but also that he is the Messiah of the world. The Gospel has a world-wide outlook.

Emphasis is placed not only upon prophetic fulfillments but also upon Jesus' anti-pharisaic pronouncements. As Professor Earnest D. Burton, writing in The Biblical World, says: "From the assertion in its first verse that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham, to the commission which, in its closing paragraph, this Christ, now risen from the dead, gives to his apostles to make disciples of all nations, the book is dominated by the purpose of convincing Jewish Christians that the religion of Jesus was not merely the Judaism of the temple plus a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, but a world-religion, freed from all bands and restrictions that were local and national."

Contents Peculiar to Matthew. Jesus' ideals for living are given more completely by Matthew than by any other Evangelist. More than half the book consists of the teachings of Jesus.

There are five great addresses in this Gospel: The Sermon on the Mount, setting forth the true righteousness, the weightiest utterance in the world, chapters 5 to 7; the address to the disciples when Jesus sent them forth on their mission, chapter 10; the seven parables that illustrate the nature and the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven, chapter 13; the discourse on humility, forgiveness, etc., of chapter 18; and the warning against Pharisaism, the lament over Jerusalem, and the parables of the judgment, chapters 23 to 25.

Its Arrangement. Matthew gives a simple, truthful, often argumentative, record of the words and deeds of Jesus. He does not give all the facts of Jesus' life essential to a complete portrait. Nor does he present his life from the historical standpoint; he omits his Judean ministry, and gives many events out of their chronological order, grouping them by topics rather than by time. It is probable that the teachings of Jesus which are presented as one great discourse, to which we have given the name of "The Sermon on the Mount," were spoken on different occasions, as reported in Luke's Gospel. Godet compares Luke to a botanist who prefers to contemplate a flower in the very place of its birth and in the midst of its natural surroundings, while Matthew is like the gardener who for some special objects puts together large and magnificent bouquets.

A General Outline.

I. The Genealogy, Birth and Infancy of Jesus. Chapters 1 and 2.
II. The Preparation for the Public Ministry. 3.1 to 4.11.
III. The Ministry in Galilee. 4.12 to 18.35.
IV. The Journey through Perea to Jerusalem. Chapters 19 and 20.
V. Passion Week. Chapters 21 to 27.
VI. The Resurrection. Chapter 28.

A Detailed Outline of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Matthew's Gospel shows that Jesus' purpose was the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. He came announcing that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and so much of the teaching given in this Gospel is concerned with the Kingdom of Heaven that it may be analyzed from this view-point.

I. Genealogy, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ. 1.1 to 2.23.
  1. The Genealogy. 1.1-17.
  2. The Birth in Bethlehem. 1.18-25.
  3. The Visit of the Magi. 2.1-12.
  4. The Flight into Egypt. 1.13-15.
  5. The Massacre of the Innocents. 2.16-18.
  6. The Return to Nazareth. 2.19-23.
II. The Special Preparation of the King. 3.1 to 14.11.
  1. The Mission of the Herald, John the Baptist. 3.1-12.
  2. The Baptism of Jesus. 3.13-17.
  3. The Temptation of Jesus. 4.1-11.

III. The King Established in Galilee. 4.12-25.
1. Settlement at Capernaum and Beginning of Public Ministry. 4.12-16.
2. Announcement of the Kingdom. 4.17.
3. Call of Four Disciples. 4.18-22.
4. The King as Teacher and Healer. 4.23-25.

IV. The Proclamation of the Kingdom: the Sermon on the Mount, its Great Charter. Chapters 5 to 7.
1. The Place. 5.1.
2. The Beatitudes. 5.2-12.
3. The Disciples as Salt and Light. 5.13-16.
4. The New Law a Continuation of the Old. 5.17-19.
5. The New Law an Enlargement of the Old. 5.20-48.
   a. The True and the False Righteousness. 5.20.
   b. Hatred as Murder. 5.21-26.
   c. Adultery and Divorce. 5.27-32.
   d. Taking an Oath. 5.33-37.
   e. Non-resistance of Evil. 5.38-42.
   f. Treatment of Enemies. 5.43-48.
6. God is the Motive of the New Righteousness. 6.1-18.
   a. Almsgiving. 6.1-4.
   b. Prayer. 6.5-15.
      In Secret. 5-6; Vain Repetitions, 7-8; the Model Prayer, 9-15; Forgiveness of Trespasses, 14-15.
   c. Fasting. 6.16-18.
7. Christian Characteristics. 6.19 to 17.12.
   a. Unworldliness. 6.19-34.
   b. Judgment of Others and of Self. 7.1-5.
   c. Communicating Religious Privileges. 7.6.
   d. Prayer. 7.7-11.
   e. The Golden Rule. 7.12.
8. Final Warnings. 7.13-27.
   a. Two Gates and Two Ways. 7.13, 14.
   b. The Test of Profession. 7.15-20.
   c. Hearers and Doers. 7.21-27.
      (The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders, 24-27.)
9. Effect of the Teaching. 7.28, 29.

V. The Credentials of the King: Ten Miracles. 8.1 to 9.34.
1. The First Group of Miracles. 8.1-22.
   a. The Leper. 8.1-4.
   b. The Centurion's Servant. 8.5-13.
   c. Peter's Wife's Mother. 8.14-17.
      (Saying of Jesus to the Scribe and the Disciple who would Follow Him, 8.18-22.)
2. The Second Group of Miracles. 8.23 to 9.17.
   a. Stilling the Storm. 8.23-27.
   b. The Gadarene Demoniac. 8.28-34.
   c. The Paralytic. 9.1-8.
      (The Call of Matthew, 9.9; Objection to Jesus because he ate with Publicans and Sinners, 9.10-13; Objection because he did not Fast, 9.14-17.)
3. The Third Group of Miracles. 9.18-34.
   a. The Ruler's Daughter and the Diseased Woman. 9.18-26.
   b. Two Blind Men. 9.27-31.
   c. The Dumb Demoniac. 9.32-34.

VI. The King's Ambassadors Sent on their Mission. 9.35 to 11.1.
1. The Ripe Harvest. 9.35-38.
2. The Mission of the Twelve Apostles. 10.1-42.
   (Their Authority, 10.1; Their Names, 10.2-4; the Charge, 10.5-42.)
3. The Departure of Christ. 11.1.

VII. Survey of the Effect of the King's Proclamation of the Kingdom. 11.2 to 12.50.
1. John the Baptist's Message of Inquiry. 11.2-19.
   (Christ's Estimation of John's Mission and Character, 7-19.)
2. Unbelief in the Galilean Cities. 11.20-24.

3. Belief of the Simple. 11.25-30.
   (The Great Invitation, 28-30.)
4. Direct Attacks on Christ. 12.1-50.
   a. Charges of Sabbath-breaking. 12.1-13.
      (Eating in the Cornfields; the Example of David and of the Priests; Healing the Man with the Withered Hand; Man of more Value than a Sheep; Lawful to Do Good on the Sabbath.)
   b. Hatred of Pharisees and their Plans to put Christ to Death. 12.14-21.
   c. Charge of Alliance with Satan. 12.22-37.
   d. Request for a Sign. 12.38-45.
   e. From His Own Household. 12.46-50.

VIII. The Reception and Progress of the Kingdom Told in Seven Parables. 13.1-52.
1. The Parable of the Sower, and its Interpretation. 13.1-23.
   (The Reason for Parables, 10-17.)
2. The Parable of the Tares, and its Interpretation. 13.24-30, 36-43.
3. The Parable of the Mustard Seed. 13.31, 32.
4. The Parable of the Leaven. 13.33.
   (Parabolical Teaching in Prophecy, 13.34-35.)
5. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure. 13.44.
6. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. 13.45, 46.
7. The Parable of the Drag-net. 13.47-50.
   (The Counsel to the Disciples, 13.51, 52.)

IX. Opinions in Regard to the King. 13.53 to 17.27.
1. A Prophet is not without Honor Save in his Own Country. 13.53-58.
2. Herod Thinks Christ John the Baptist, Whom he Killed. 14.1-12.
3. Favorable Opinion of the People because of the Loaves and Fishes. 14.13-21; 15.32-39.

As Literature. Matthew's Gospel is distinguished from the other Gospels in its philosophical and effective grouping of incidents and sayings, its logical unfolding of the Master's program. Every reader must mark the total absence of the rhetorical, the sobriety and moderation of expression in the narrative of miraculous events.

And where shall we find more perfect words than in the Sermon on the Mount? Or words of greater power and beauty than all Jesus' other addresses in the Gospel?

Writing upon The Literature of the Bible, Dr. Moulton says: "What Homer is in epic poetry, what Shakespeare is among dramatists, that Jesus of Nazareth is as a Sayer of sayings. It is hardly necessary to use illustrations. Let the dead bury their dead—They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick—Men put not new wine into old wine-skins—I came not to sow peace but a sword upon earth—Wisdom hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes—The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence—He that saveth his life shall lose it—He that hath to him shall be given—Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's: these paradoxes are amongst the profoundest of life's principles. Yet these are among the slighter sayings of Jesus. What literature associates mainly with his name are the wonderful parables: children love them, they are grasped at once by the unlettered; yet the deep thinker, the more he thinks, sees more and more a whole philosophy of life standing out clear from a story of half-a-dozen lines. Such sayings and parables are recorded in all the Gospels; but more of them by Matthew than by the other Evangelists."

Its Value. This Gospel brings us face to face with Jesus Christ. Well does Erasmus, the famous Dutch scholar, declare in his preface to the first Greek Testament ever published: "These writings bring before thee, reader, the lively likeness of the very Christ himself in his talking, in his healing, in his dying, in his rising again—the whole Christ, in a word, they so present to thy view, that if thou shouldest behold his form with thy bodily eyes, methinks thou wouldst see him less."

Even Renan terms this "The most important book that has ever been written." Robert Louis Stevenson rightly says in Books Which Have Influenced Me: "I believe it would startle and move any one, if he could make a certain effort of imagination, and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a por-

tion of the Bible." Ruskin in St. Mark's Rest writes: "The Gospel which the publican wrote for us, with its perfect Sermon on the Mount, and mostly more harmonious and gentle fulness in places where St. Luke is formal, St. John mysterious, and St. Mark brief—this Gospel According to St. Matthew, I should think, if we had to choose one out of all the books in the Bible for a prison or a desert friend, would be the one we should keep."

THE ACTS

The Title. In the Authorized Version the title given this book is "The Acts of the Apostles." The words *of the Apostles* are lacking in the Sinaitic manuscript, and were probably added in other manuscripts by the copyist. The book is not an account of the acts of all the apostles: it tells of the acts of Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, but aside from the list of the twelve apostles given in 1.13 only Peter, John, and the two James are mentioned by name. I like the title given the book by a black man in Africa with whom Dan Crawford consulted; it has, as the latter says, a thrill in it—*Words Concerning Deeds.*

By Whom Written. Two theories are held in regard to the authorship of Acts. Some scholars believe that it was edited by an unknown writer of the second century from several documents, among them the "Travel Documents," which were probably written by Luke. The majority of scholars believe that Luke was the writer of the entire book.

The book itself does not name the writer. However, in his introductory sentence, the writer tells us that it is a continuation of a former work: he addresses it to a certain Theophilus, to whom also the Third Gospel is addressed; and the Acts resembles the Third Gospel in vocabulary and style. The early Christian writers speak of Luke as the author of both the Third Gospel and the Acts. The Acts is Volume II, as it were, of Luke's History of the Origin and Spread of Christianity, the Gospel According to Luke being Volume I.

The occasional use of the pronoun *we* shows that the writer was at times a companion of Paul on his journeys. From Paul's letters, which give the names of his chief companions and certain facts concerning them, it is seen that Luke must have been the companion who was with Paul on all the occasions recorded in the Acts in the "We-portions," or "Travel Documents," as they are called. It has been shown that for all events in which Luke himself did not participate it is possible to point to a particular occasion on which he either visited the places where they occurred and therefore came in contact with those who could give first-hand testimony, or met the persons about whom the events are narrated.

Luke was a Greek by birth, and a physician by profession. He is mentioned by name but three times in all the New Testament; and each time by Paul, who calls him "the beloved physician." It is interesting to recall that a physician in the Roman world was a man of culture, and he was also a man of means, if we rely on Pliny's statement that the practice of medicine was the most lucrative of all the professions of his day.

The Date. Great divergence of opinion exists as to the probable date when this history was written. It was known in Rome (as the First Epistle of Clement shows) by 95 A. D. Because it contains no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem its date is placed by some before 70 A. D., but this inference is not conclusive. Because it records the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome its date may be given as subsequent to 63 A. D.

The Purpose of the Book. The book is not a biography of the apostles. It is not an account of the acts, or lives, of even Peter and Paul. Peter disappears from the record after the fifteenth chapter, not because his work has ceased, but because the progress of Christianity left Peter and the Jewish field on one side and developed the Gentile field under Paul. The Acts is the history of the expansion of the early Church. It is the story of men who had learned of Christ and were fulfilling his commission to teach the world. It is Christianity in action.

In his introduction Luke declares the purpose of his writing, and gives the three keynotes by which it is to be understood. As his former work, his Gospel, is a record of all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach until he was received up, so this work is (1) a record of what Jesus *continued* to do and to teach

through his followers. Jesus had commanded them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria—and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Acts records (2) how this command was fulfilled. This command to preach the Gospel was given "through the Holy Spirit," and it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the command is obeyed. The Acts has been called (3) "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit," for his guidance is recognized at every step.

In the course of his narrative, Luke plainly shows the growth of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-wide religion; the freeing of Gentile Christianity from Jewish law; and the supreme greatness of Paul, whose "acts" occupy three-fifths of the book.

No attempt is made to write a complete account of events. Some events are described with great fulness, some are but briefly mentioned, and some are omitted entirely.

The Character of the Book. It is turbulent, tumultuous history which the book records; but it is a record of triumphant achievements in spite of Jewish jealousy, prejudice and persecution, pagan opposition, and Roman power. The theme of the preaching is Jesus the Christ. The triumphant onward march of the gospel is under the generalship of God himself, his messengers are commissioned by the Son, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

"Jesus is dominant in the Gospels; the Spirit of Jesus in the Acts. He is the only continuous Personality from first to last. The first twelve chapters group about Peter, the remaining sixteen about Paul, but distinctly above both they all group about the Holy Spirit. He is the one dominant factor throughout. The first fourth of the book is fairly aflame with his presence at the center—Jerusalem. Thence out to Samaria, and through the Cornelius door to the whole outer non-Jewish world; at Antioch the new center, and thence through the uttermost parts of the Roman empire into its heart, his is the Presence recognized and obeyed. He is ceaselessly guiding, empowering, inspiring, checking, controlling, clear to the abrupt end. And everywhere his presence is a transforming presence. Nothing short of startling is the change in Peter, in the attitude of the Jerusalem thousands, in the persecutor Saul, in the spirit of these disciples, in the unprecedented and unparalleled unselfishness shown. It is revolutionary. Ah! it was meant to be so. This book is the living illustration of what Jesus meant by his teaching regarding his successor. It becomes also an active illustration of what the personal Christian life is meant to be. This explains the indomitable energy, the fervent devotion, whereby through trial and temptation, his disciples entered into triumph, and were able to win for the Redeemer, from east to west, from north to south, those rich triumphs of grace, of lives changed, and consecrated to the glory of God and his kingdom. Well may the Acts be called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit."

Thirteen great prayer-meetings, nine great revivals, and ten great sermons are recorded in the book.

The Outline of the First Twelve Chapters.

I. Introduction. 1.1-5.
II. The Early Christian Community at Jerusalem, under the Leadership of Peter. 1.6 to 8.1.
  1. Preparation for Work. 1.1 to 2.42.
    a. The Commission and the Ascension. 1.6-11.
    b. Waiting for the Coming of the Spirit. 1.12-26.
    c. The Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. 2.1-13.
    d. Peter's Discourse and its Results. 2.14-42.
  2. Early Ministry. 2.43 to 8.1.
    a. Unity of the Church. 2.43-47.
    b. Cure of the Lame Beggar at the Temple. 3.1-10.
    c. Peter's Discourse, and Arrest and Trial of Peter and John. 3.11 to 4.31.
    d. All Things Held in Common; Gift of Barnabas; Gift of Ananias and Sapphira and their Punishment. 4.32 to 5.11.
    e. Believers Multiplied; Apostles again Imprisoned are Divinely Liberated. Gamaliel's Advice. 5.12-42.
    f. The Choosing of the Seven. 6.1-6.
    g. The Martyrdom of Stephen. 6.7 to 8.1.
III. Evangelization in Judea, Samaria and Syria under the Leadership of Philip, Peter and Barnabas. 8.2 to 11.30.

1. The Church Persecuted and Scattered. 8.1-4.
2. The Ministry of Philip. 8.5-40.
3. Paul's Conversion and Preparation for Service. 9.1-30.
4. The Ministry of Peter. 9.31 to 11.18.
   a. The Cure of Æneas at Lydda. 9.31-35.
   b. The Raising of Dorcas at Joppa. 9.36-43.
   c. Cornelius and Peter, Peter's Vision and Lesson that God is No Respecter of Persons. 10.1-48.
   d. Peter Justifies his Conduct at Jerusalem. 11.1-18.
5. The Ministry of Barnabas and Paul at Antioch in Syria. 11.19-30.

IV. The Persecution of the Church at Jerusalem. 12.1-25.
1. Death of James. 12.1, 2.
2. Imprisonment of Peter and his Escape. 12.3-19.
3. Death of Herod. 12.20-23.
4. Growth of the Church. Return of Barnabas and Paul to Antioch. 12.24.25.

As Literature. Occasionally the writing is so condensed as to be a trifle obscure. Occasionally a line of the narrative is carried forward for awhile and then dropped while Luke goes back in time to take up another line, and the transitions are not skillfully made. And, as Professor Ramsay observes, Luke expects a great deal from the reader. He does not attempt to sketch the surroundings and set the whole scene like a picture before one; he states the bare facts that seem to him important, and leaves the reader to imagine the situation.

But Luke has the true historian's skill of seizing the salient features of the history and passing quickly by events, however important in themselves, whose narration would not further the purpose of his writing. And while it is a plain, unvarnished tale which Luke gives us, it is no bare recital, for with a few vigorous strokes he draws a succession of living pictures which show us a living church. He writes with enthusiasm for his subject, and with sympathetic insight into the feelings of others.

Lessons for Today. "It would be difficult in the whole range of literature to find a work where there is less attempt at pointing a moral or drawing a lesson from the facts," thinks Professor Ramsay. "The narrator is persuaded that the facts themselves in their barest form are a perfect lesson and a complete instruction." How well he succeeded is seen from Dr. J. H. Jowett's opinion that there is "no more buoyant, stirring, exhilarating book in the Word of God than the Acts." Certainly there is a mighty force in the Acts impelling toward Christian love, missionary zeal, and heroic living. Who can read it without an irresistible desire to have his share in making Jesus the Christ known to the uttermost part of the earth?

PALESTINE
IN THE
TIME OF CHRIST
0 5 10 20 30 40
SCALE OF MILES
35°
36°
33°
32°
31°
35°
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
Ladder of Tyre
PHENICIA
Lebanon
R. Leontes
ITUREA
Anti-Lebanon
Mt. Hermon
Damascus
PANIAS
Dan
Cæsarea Philippi
ITUREA
TRACHONITIS
UPPER GALILEE
TETRARCHY OF HERODIAS
Waters of Merom (L. Huleh)
Ptolemais
Bay of Acre
Rumah
Sated
Chorazin
Bethsaida Julias
Capernaum
GALILEE
Sea of Galilee
Cerasa
Magdala
Kurn Hattin
Cana
Tiberias
Hippos
Gamala
Ashtaroth
AURANITIS
Yarmuk R.
Bethlehem
Nazareth
Mt. Tabor
Mt. Carmel
Esdraelon
R. Kishon
LOWER GALILEE
Tirichea
Abila
Gadara
Kanata
Edrei
Megiddo
Nain
Jezreel
Scythopolis (Bethshan)
Bethabara
Cæsarea
Mt. Gilboa
Salim(?)
DECAPOLIS
Pella
Dium
Aenon(?)
SAMARIA
Samaria
Mt. Ebal
Shechem
Sychar
Jacob's Well
Gerasa
Apollonia
Plain of Sharon
Jordan R.
Mt. Gerizim
R. Jabbok
Antipatris
Joppa
Arimathea
Thamna
Phasaelis
Archelais(?)
GILEAD
PEREA
Philadelphia
Lydda
Gophna
Ephraim
Bethel
Jericho
Jamnia
Ekron
Emmaus
Emmaus(?)
Jerusalem
Mt. of Olives
Bethany
Livias
Julias
Heshbon
Nebo
Ashdod
Azotus
Bethlehem
Adrom R.
Herodium
Ashkelon
JUDEA
Callirrhoe
Machærus
Eleutheropolis
Bethzur
Gaza
Hebron
Dibon
Arnon R.
DEAD SEA (SALT SEA)
Masada
Wilderness of Judea
Beersheba
IDUMEA
MOAB
Rehoboth
THE GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN SEA)
PHILISTIA
PROPER
EXPLANATION OF COLORING
Below sea level, 1292 feet below at the Dead Sea.
Sea Level to 500 feet altitude.
500 to 1,500 feet altitude.
1,500 to 3,000 feet altitude
Above 3,000 feet altitude.
C.S.H. & CO., N.Y.
35°
Longitude East from Greenwich

FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I—JANUARY 4

PETER PREACHES AT PENTECOST

Golden Text

Whosoever shall call on the name of
the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2.21

LESSON Acts 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 16

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Joel 2.28-32; John 16.7-15; Acts 1.1-26

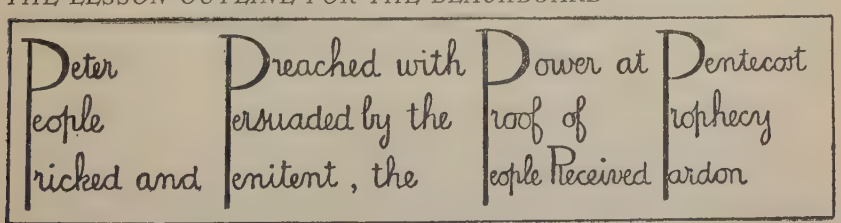
ACTS 2.14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying,* Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.
22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.
32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.
36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.
37 Now when they heard *this,* they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, verses 1-4.
II. THE EFFECT UPON THE OBSERVERS, verses 5-13.

III. PETER'S SERMON, verses 14-36. Simon Peter, who seven weeks before Pentecost had been afraid to admit to a maidservant that he was one of Jesus' disciples, on the morning of Pentecost was "filled with the Spirit," and boldly stood up and proclaimed to the great crowd of native Jews of Jerusalem and Jews from distant lands that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and moreover, did not hesitate to charge them with the sin of having crucified the Christ. The Spirit's power had utterly changed the craven denier of his Lord.

Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them. Although Judas was gone, there were still twelve apostles at this time, for Matthias had been selected to fill his place. *Give ear unto my words,* Peter exclaimed. Meditate upon their meaning for you. As he was speaking to Jews, his object was to prove that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and expectations in regard to the Messiah, so his first words (verse 15-21) were that the events of Pentecost which had so amazed them were but the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2.28-32), that at the coming of the Messiah God's Spirit would be poured forth, and old and young, men and women, bond and free, would see visions and speak divine truths.

Then Peter took up his great theme that Jesus is the Christ, and gave three proofs. *Jesus of Nazareth*—his hearers had despised Jesus because he was of Nazareth, and for this reason Pilate had had this title put upon the superscription of the cross—*a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs* (all terms used in the Gospels for *miracles*) *which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know:* here was his first proof, the miracles of which his hearers themselves were witnesses. *Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God* (it was all in accordance with God's will: See Lk. 22.22; Jn. 3.16; Gal. 4.4, 5) *ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay.* Jesus was put to death by the Sanhedrin, who acted contrary to law; and by the Romans, who were not governed by the sacred law; and by the lawless people who cried, "Crucify him, crucify him." *Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it:* this was the *second proof* that Jesus is the Christ. The expression *having loosened the pangs of death* is from Ps. 18.4. The argument of the following verses, 25-31, is that the prophecy quoted from David in Psalm 16 had not been fulfilled in David, who died and was buried and whose body saw corruption, but had been fulfilled in Jesus. Of the fact of the resurrection *we all are witnesses,* declared Peter. The apostles considered it their special duty to bear witness to Jesus' resurrection, Acts 1.22.

Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted: God had raised him from the dead to higher life and wider power. *And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear:* the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost confirmed the truth of the resurrection and is Peter's *third proof* that Jesus is the Christ. He still lived and cared for his followers, for it was he who had sent the Spirit.

Furthermore, the resurrection and exaltation fulfilled another prophecy of David, as given in Psalm 110.1. This Psalm is entitled "Jehovah Gives Dominion to the King. A Psalm of David." The King is not David himself, *for David ascended not into the heavens,* but he says in this Psalm, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand.* Two different Hebrew words for *Lord* are used here, and the meaning is, *Jehovah* said unto my Messiah. *Sit thou on my right hand* means, Be a partaker of the divine glory and dominion. In Mt. 22. 43-45 and Mk. 12.35-37 Jesus quotes these words from this Psalm and attributes to David divine inspiration in thus speaking of the Messiah. *Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet* is an expression denoting complete victory, and originated, doubtless, from the ancient custom of conquerors putting their feet on their enemies' necks.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, concluded Peter, *that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.* Lord and Christ, Sovereign and Messiah, this is the climax of Peter's Sermon.

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON, verses 37-41. Peter's words, especially the appeal to prophecy, were convincing to the Jews, and the home-thrust at their consciences—*whom ye crucified—pricked* their hearts, convinced them of their sin. *Brethren, what shall we do?* they asked. How can they be freed

from their guilt? *Repent ye, and be baptized,* was Peter's answer. They must not only repent of their sin, but they must change their views in regard to Jesus; the one whom they had regarded as a false Christ, they must accept as the true Christ; and they would acknowledge this by being *baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins.*

And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, declared Peter, *for to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.* "The promise had at first been of material blessings, e. g., the land of Canaan, but as these were obtained and yet the ideal was not attained, the content of the promise grew deeper and more spiritual until it became the promise of the presence of God himself in his Spirit" (Rackham). *To all that are afar off* may refer to the Jews who were scattered abroad, or it may refer to the Gentiles, for it is an expression often used for Gentiles in both the Old and the New Testaments. If the latter was meant, Peter at this time, of course, thought of the promise as being to the Gentiles only in case they became Jewish proselytes. *And with many other words Peter exhorted them* to save themselves from sharing the guilt and fate of their *crooked* (perverse) *generation.*

Assyrian King Placing His Foot on the Neck of an Enemy.

About three thousand believed Peter's words and were baptized *that day.* It has been pointed out that *that day,* according to Biblical usage, need not necessarily mean the day of Pentecost, but may rather mean *that period,* the first epoch in the life of the Church. This interpretation has been adopted by many on account of the seeming impossibility of three thousand persons being baptized in one day in Jerusalem, where water was not abundant. But there were numerous pools encircling the city (some of them still in use) and the habits of the East would not prevent these public reservoirs being used for this purpose.

All these new converts became members of the Christian community, and were *steadfast* in their attention to the *apostles' teaching,* lived with wonderful unity and comradeship with the rest, and shared in *the breaking of bread and in the* public *prayers.* It must not be forgotten that no part of the New Testament was written at this time, and the apostles taught from memory the lessons of Jesus' life and words. In the second century, after the Gospels were written, these were read at the weekly services for worship.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Into the heavens, verse 34. The Jews were wont to speak of a number of "heavens," or realms above the earth. According to Rabbi Abia, there were six ante-chambers, as it were, or steps, to the seventh heaven, where God himself dwelt. There are several references in the Scriptures to "the third heaven"; the first heaven was held to be the firmament; the second the region of the stars; the third, the throne of God.

Breaking of bread, verse 43. "The Jews' bread was baked in cakes and divided for distribution by breaking, and apparently the head of the house would begin the meal by solemnly breaking bread and giving thanks over it; and so the term *breaking of bread* came to denote this commencement of a meal with blessing."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

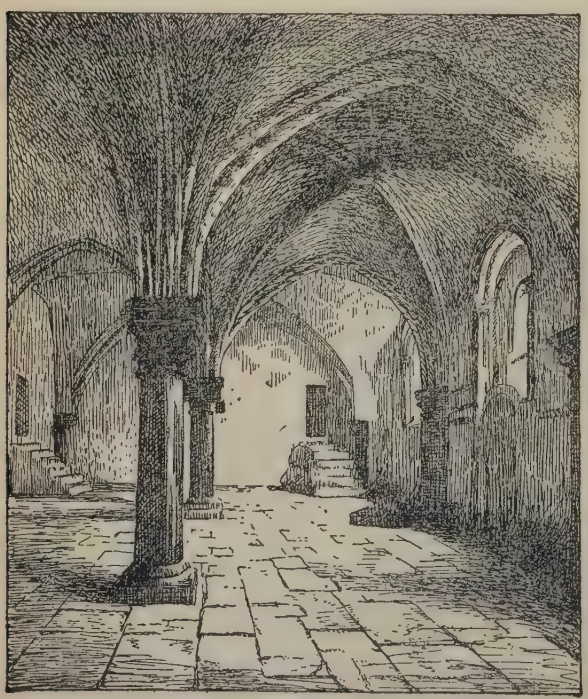
Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did Jesus bid Peter do, in that last interview which Peter had with him? Of what did Jesus' threefold repetition remind Peter? Contrast the Peter of our lesson two weeks ago with the Peter in today's lesson. What did we learn last year about the Holy Spirit? What did we learn about repentance? About baptism? When was Jesus "baptized with the Holy Spirit"? On what occasion was fire a symbol to Moses of the presence of the Spirit of God?

Our Last Quarter's Lessons. See pages 21 and 22 of our Introduction.

The Lesson Learned at the Ascension. Peter and John had been open-minded pupils, open-hearted to their Great Teacher's influence, but some of his lessons were very hard for them to learn. The miracle of miracles had taken place. Jesus had proved his sovereignty over the powers of death, and yet as he was about to be parted from them, when he met them for the last time on the Mount of Olives, their thoughts were still upon the things seen, while his were upon the things not seen. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" the disciples asked, and patiently Jesus replied, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." "They were looking for the re-ordering of circumstances, he was looking for the transformation of character. They were asking for carnal dominion; he, for a spiritual dynamic. They wanted to make a broken people into a Kingdom, he was waiting to make individual men into Kings. 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom?' 'Ye shall become Kings, when the Holy Spirit is upon you.'"

They were to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit's coming "not many days hence." And what was the purpose of the promised blessing? To fit them to be his witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when Jesus had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

The Feast of Pentecost. The word *Pentecost* means *the fiftieth day feast,* and was so called because observed fifty days after the third day of the Passover season, Lev. 23.15. It was the feast of first fruits, when two loaves made from the grain just harvested were consecrated to God. There was always a great crowd of people in Jerusalem at this festival.



The Traditional "Upper Room"

The Date and Place of Meeting. This Pentecost was ten days after Christ's ascension, May 27, 30 A. D. After Jesus was parted from them on the Mount of Olives, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and remained the ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost. Soon after dawn on the day of Pentecost they probably went to the temple for the sacrifices and the offering of the first fruits, and then assembled in the "Upper Room" of the house which was their headquarters. The traditional room shown today is on Mount Zion. It is reached by an outside stairway, and is large enough to hold the "multitude" mentioned in Acts 1.15. Its roof is supported by seven pillars. When the crowd arrived (verse 6), they probably assembled in the courtyard of the house, and there Peter delivered his sermon.

The Book of the Acts. In the Third Gospel, Luke had told the story of what Jesus began both to do and to teach; in the Book of Acts he tells what

Jesus continued to do and to teach through his apostles. The apostles were inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been called Christ's *alter ego,* other self. It was Christ's other self that, through his apostles, continued his work.

For the Book of Acts, see our Introduction. (The information there given should be imparted or recalled, from week to week, as indicated in the Assigned Work.)

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Dr. Stigler says of Peter's address: "In its adroitness, in the arrangement of the arguments, in its analysis, in its steering clear of Jewish prejudices, in its appeal and effect, it is without a peer among the products of uninspired men. As an expression of persuasive argument it has no rival. The more it is studied the more its beauty and power are disclosed."

Note that Peter began his talk by securing attention, and he secured it by recalling to his hearers' minds something which they themselves knew—the mighty works and wonders which God had wrought through Jesus in their midst.

Study Peter's talk and note his aim through it all, and how he steadily led up to it till he brought his truth home to his hearers with telling force that this Jesus whom they crucified is both Lord and Christ. So convincingly did he speak that he accomplished his purpose, for his hearers were pricked in their heart and said, "Brethren, what shall we do?" That was an aim worthy of all his efforts.

Do you ever come before your class without any aim for the lesson's teaching? Is your aim ever small in comparison with the exertions you put forth? Is your aim sometimes defective? Do you hit, as well as aim?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE STORY OF PENTECOST

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Who will tell the story of how Peter showed himself a coward on the night of Jesus' trial? Who will tell the story of the last conversation which Peter had with Jesus after his resurrection? What did Jesus mean when he bade Peter "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs"?

Jesus had given his apostles a great task, they were to bear witness to him and preach his gospel to all the world. It was a difficult and dangerous mission. They were only ordinary men, fishermen, men without great learning, wealth or influence. Even if they had possessed all these things, the task would have been too much for them. To succeed in such a mission men need more than human gifts—a force, a power, that shall aid their efforts. And today we have the story of how such power was given to the apostles—not to make them great and famous, but to make them successful in the work their Lord had given them to do.

The Power, What it Was and What it Did. First let us see what the Power was. Love, knowledge, money, these are all great powers. But it was none of these. It was a Spirit, a Holy Spirit and a Personal Spirit. It was not something but *Someone* who came to live in them to guide, to strengthen, to inspire, and to make mighty everything they did. It was the One Jesus talked so much about in his last days, the One he called the Comforter, and who, he said, should testify of him and enable them to understand all things concerning him. Jesus had carried out his promises.

Then let us see how the disciples got the Power. It was through *obedience.* Jesus had told them to "tarry in Jerusalem till they received power from on high," and this they did. They had to wait forty days, but they never lost heart nor faith, nor patience. It was through *right living* also that they obtained the Power. During all that long waiting-time they strove to do his will and lived brotherly, helpful lives, and then the Power came through *prayer.* They often gathered together to talk about Jesus, to encourage one another, and to pray. And it was at one of their gatherings that the great moment came. It was not an unexpected event, you see, but one they had been waiting for. It was not an accident, or just a bit of "luck." It was the direct result of their obedience, faith, right living, and prayer. If they had failed in those things they would have waited in vain.

Then see what the Power did for them. It *changed* them, giving them a radiance, a joy, which made them appear different. It let loose their own powers. Men who could not say a word before, were now able to preach in such a way that foreigners understood them. It gave them influence with the people, arousing their curiosity and leading them to listen and to question. It made them powerful, able to touch the consciences and hearts of men and lead them to Christ. And it enabled them to endure, to face peril, to be loyal to Jesus in the face of enemies, of suffering, and even of death. They who had been weak and cowardly and had deserted their Lord in the hour of his need, were now bold and ready to endure all things for his sake.

The Holy Spirit's Guidance. Little Juliana, the daughter of the Queen of Holland, was once walking with her nurse when she came upon some children who were fighting. She rushed toward them intent upon joining in, when her horrified nurse exclaimed, "What would your mother, the Queen, think of you?" "No, I don't think she would like it," answered Juliana, and she went quietly away with her companion. You have been away from home. Has not the thought of your mother stopped you sometimes, when you were about to do something wrong?

"Perhaps some one of you has a mother in heaven," writes Grace Winter (in the Sunday School Chronicle). "Do you not feel that she is still somewhere, though you cannot see her, and that you must not do wrong because she will be grieved? That is your mother's gentle influence dwelling in your heart, and it is strong enough to keep you from sin. The Holy Spirit is God's holy influence, whom God will send to dwell in our hearts, and who will keep us from sin."

The Holy Spirit can dwell in all our hearts at once. Is that strange? When you feel your mother's influence, whether she is only a few miles away or whether she has left you and gone to heaven, your brothers and sisters can also feel that influence at the same time, can they not? Her influence can dwell in the hearts of all the family at the same time. And so God's holy influence can dwell in many hearts at the same time. He can make us all loving and wise and strong and brave, as he made those disciples. They were timid and foolish and weak often before he came to them, but he changed their nature, and he will change ours too, if we will let him take possession of our hearts. Let us ask God to send his holy influence into our hearts to dwell with us.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Acts 1.8.

"Though on our heads no tongues of fire
Their wondrous power impart,
Grant, Savior, what we more desire,
Thy Spirit in our heart."

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How old was the lame man? (Acts 4.22.) 2. Was it a common way for beggars to wait around the temple? 3. Tell the story of what Jesus did for a man who could not walk. (Jn. 5.1-9.) 4. What parable did Jesus give which tells how to help the afflicted? 5. What gifts are more valuable than money? 6. What gift did Jesus once receive from Mary that was far more valuable than money? 7. What opportunities have you to give valuable gifts? 8. In what ways will you be helpful this week?

Note-Book Work. Begin Part II of your "Studies in the Lives of Peter and John." Today write: the Lesson Title; two statements about the circumstances in which Peter delivered his sermon; two statements about the sermon; one statement about the result of the sermon; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: PETER WINS THREE THOUSAND TO CHRIST

Additional Material: Acts 4.4; 6, 7.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Who was General Stanley Maude? What did he do in the Great War? It was he who surmounted insurmountable obstacles, saved the Mesopotamian campaign from disaster, and took Bagdad. When he lay dying of cholera, he roused himself long enough to say to his secretary, "Tell them I can't come to the office today. They must just 'carry on.'"

Such an order came to Peter and John and the other disciples after the resurrection of their Great Commander, and in this Book of Acts we see them "car-

rying on." What special message to "carry on" did Peter receive? (Our lesson two weeks ago.)

The Condition of the Disciples before they Received the Holy Spirit. A condition of *exultation.* Christ had risen from the dead! The gloom had gone! Joy abounds! It is not necessary to make ourselves sad and miserable in order to be fitted to receive the Holy Spirit.

A condition of *supplication.* They were engaged in regular intercourse with God. And this, not only as individuals, but in fellowship. Two people praying together are more efficient and effective than one.

A condition of *expectation.* They were all on the alert, watchful and expectant. To expect a spiritual blessing is to attract it. Noble expectation is a spiritual magnet, and draws the coveted grace into our souls.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Waiting for Power. Barrie has a little fable in one of his works about a baby lark asking its mother to teach it to fly. "The mother thought hard about how she herself had learnt to fly long ago, last year, but all she could recall was that you suddenly do it. 'Wait till the sun comes out after the rain,' she said, half remembering. The rain came and glued the bird's wings together. 'I shall never be able to fly nor to sing,' it wailed. Then of a sudden it had to blink its eyes, for a glorious light had spread over the world. The baby-bird's breast swelled, it did not know why, and it fluttered from the ground, it did not know how. 'The sun has come out after the rain,' it trilled; 'Thank you, sun, thank you,' and floated up crying, 'Thank you.'"

Suddenly in the fulness of time the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples with one accord in one place. They were filled with the Spirit. The promised power had come. The sun broke upon them and all things became new.—Sunday School Chronicle.

Spiritual Power is for Practical Purpose. The power given the disciples at Pentecost was given them to be used. They were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. All spiritual power is for use in God's service. To us, as to Peter, God is saying, "Be my co-worker, and help me to win this world to a redeeming knowledge of my Son and their Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Let us add apostleship to our discipleship.

A Pentecost in Korea. Mr. Frank L. Brown met a native of Pyeng Yang, Korea, who had spoken to three thousand four hundred individuals, urging them to accept Christ. And he met a group of boys, sixteen to eighteen years old, from a Christian Boys' School, who had given up their Christmas holidays to hold evangelistic services in surrounding villages, with the result that over three thousand were converted. "A modern Pentecost," observes Mr. Brown, "and mere boys were the leaders."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Not the Cross, but the Tongue of Fire, is the true symbol of the Church's life and service.—Hugh Price Hughes.

The Holy Spirit is our indwelling Partner.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The one object of my life has been to bring men to God.—Lamartine, Poet, Orator, Statesman.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In the Authorized Version what is the full title of the Book of the Acts? 2. Does the book record the acts of all the apostles? 3. Who are its two chief heroes? 4. What instances do the Gospels record of Peter and John being together? (Lk. 5.10; Mk. 5.37; 9.2; Lk. 22.8; Mt. 26.37; Jn. 18.15, 16; 20.3, 4; 21.7.) 5. What were the hours of prayer fixed by Ex. 29.41? 6. Where were the Beautiful Gate and Solomon's Porch? 7. What custom in regard to beggars prevails in the East? 8. Which would you rather have, health or wealth? 9. What is better than giving alms to beggars at the door? 10. What great modern relief work is the result of Christianity? 11. What is your class doing for the unfortunate? 12. What besides are you doing?

Note-Book Work. Begin a Note-Book entitled "Peter and John continuing their Master's Work." Today write: At Pentecost.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE PERMANENT MESSAGE OF PENTECOST Or, PETER'S MESSAGE AT PENTECOST

Additional Material: Luke 24.49; Acts 1.8, 12-14; 4.31; 1 Cor. 12.4-11.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "There is always romance in a be-

ginning," writes Mr. R. C. Gillie. "If we understand, there is solemnity too; but at least there is romance. As the stream leaves the fountain which gave it birth, and begins to be what will become a vast river; as the steamer leaves the quay edging out into the waterway on its thousand-league voyage, the thoughtful spectator cannot but feel a touch of excitement. Much more, as we watch the trickling rill of Christian influence begin to flow, as we see the ship of the Church getting ready for its voyage across the centuries, the intelligent beholder is touched with a sense of adventure, made up of strangeness, alarm, and hope. Here is a new thing, a quite new thing, in the way of beginnings. Blot out nearly 1900 years with an effort of imagination, and watch this beginning.

"It is fitting that a new book should mark the first stage of the new movement. So we have the Book of Acts launched just where the beginning is. It commences at a hinge of history, at a sudden turn in the road. We are leaving the familiar valley. Our faces are toward the great world. We no longer linger in the little land with its one eminent city. The pathway will lead across an empire to cities of prouder fame, to Antioch, Athens, and Rome. And to the very end it is a book of beginnings. Read it swiftly, and it leaves you breathless. There are in it so many beginnings.

"But the book is also a sequel. The author has written a first volume. 'In my former volume, I treated all that Jesus began by doing and teaching.' There is value in this connection. It helps us to realize what some men fail to perceive, that the Peter of Pentecost, bold as a lion, equipped at all points, is the same person as the clumsy coward who denied his Lord just a month before, and finding himself in a dangerous place, knew no way out of it but to repeat his lie with oaths. It is a record of transformations. The men of the Gospels reappear in the Book of Acts, the same yet how changed!"

How the Disciples Prepared for Pentecost. "They continued in prayer and supplication." There never has been a revival that did not have that preparation. The Reformation was rooted in prayer. The same may be said of the great Puritan Revival. The Puritan writings are quaint, unique, and yet, withal, so natural, and so spiritual, that you cannot read a Puritan book without feeling it is permeated by prayer. The writer is talking to you because he has been talking to God. He is one that lives in the secret place of the Most High, and he has come from the inner chamber to tell the world what God has told him. At the back of the Eighteenth Century Revival, too, were John Wesley, George Whitefield, and others, on their knees crying to God.—Dr. A. C. Dixon.

How the Holy Spirit Came. In the "Holy Night" of Correggio, you remember how the stable of the nativity is lighted with the radiance which shines from the face of the Child. That is what the painter saw. Very likely the shepherds, who had already seen a celestial light in the sky, saw it glowing again in the stable. No doubt, the holy mother saw it. But to a casual passer-by or to a stable-boy coming in to feed the cows, there would have been no light except such as glimmered in the lantern. Probably the man in the street, hearing a commotion on the day of Pentecost in the upper room,—if that was the place,—and rushing in, would have missed all sound and hearing of the wind and fire.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit wonderfully revealed himself to the disciples, filled them with a new consciousness of his divine presence, and blessed them. That is, in the midst of a world which is full of God, suddenly this little company of holy persons were made aware of God. Out of the infinite silence, God spoke to them. And it was as if the wind blew which swept across the face of Elijah in the cleft of the rock; it was as if the fire blazed amongst them which Elijah saw before he heard the still small voice. That is as near as the narrator can get to it.—Dean Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

To You is the Promise. To a great many Christians the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is meaningless. Dwight L. Moody's definition of the Holy Spirit is not quite orthodox, but it is fine. "The Holy Spirit," said Moody, "is God at work." God at work! And this is the message of Peter here. God is at work in the world, and God who has spoken through intermediaries in the past will now speak directly, and you shall all take him as you are able to take him; the promise is to you and to your descendants and to those that are afar off.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Signs of the Holy Spirit's Presence Then and Now. And what is the

characteristic of a rushing mighty wind? It dispels the fog. It freshens the atmosphere. It gives life and nimbleness to the air. It is the minister of vitality. And the breath of God's Spirit is like that; it clears the human spirit, and freshens it, and vitalizes it; it acts upon the soul like the air of a spiritual spring. And as for the symbol of the fire; fire is the antagonist of the torpid, the tepid; it is the minister of the fervor, and buoyancy, and expansion. The wind changes the atmosphere, the fire changes the temperature; and the Holy Spirit of God changes the atmosphere and temperature of the soul; and when you have changed the atmosphere and temperature of a soul you have accomplished a mighty transformation.

Where shall we look for that holy fire in human life? In fervent enthusiasm for the cause of Christ's Kingdom. The fire of God generates steam, it creates driving power, it produces forceful and invincible enthusiasm. You will find abundant examples of this spiritual miracle in the Acts of the Apostles. Let your eyes glance over the apostolic record. Mark how the fire of God endows man with the power of magnificent initiative.

The first apostles drove through tremendous obstacles. Indeed, they never had the comfort of an open and unimpeded road. Every road was thick with adversaries. What then? Through them or over them! "But, Sire," said a timid and startled officer to Napoleon, on receiving apparently impossible commands, "But, Sire, there are the Alps!" "Then there must be no Alps," replied the audacious chief. "There must be no Alps!" That was the very spirit of the first apostles. Mighty antagonisms reared themselves in their way,—ecclesiastical prejudices, the prejudices of culture, social hostilities, political expediences, and all the subtle and violent contrivances of the world the flesh and the devil. "But, Sire, there are the Alps!" "There must be no Alps!" Through them! Over them! What that coward Peter got through when the fire of God glowed in his soul!

And that same holy fire gives the same terrific power today, the same driving enthusiasm, the same patient, dogged, invincible perseverance. If a man declares that he has received the fire of God's Holy Spirit, I will look eagerly for the impetus of his sacred enthusiasm. If he be a teacher, I will examine the generated steam, and note how much he can do, how far he can travel, and how long he can hold out in the service of his Lord. If he be a man who has set himself to some piece of social reconstruction I will watch with what ardor, and ingenuity, and inevitableness he is moving towards his goal. Is it the smashing of the saloons? "Then Peter, filled with the Holy fire"—what if that power were harnessed to the enterprise? Or is it the awful plague and blight of impurity; or is it the cleaning up of politics; the establishment of rectitude in civic and national life? Whatever it be, the holy fire of God will reveal its presence in the soul of man in an ardent enthusiasm which cannot be quenched.—Condensed from The Whole Armor of God, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Verses 1-4. See A Transfigured Church, Chapter I, of book by this title, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

2. There were added unto them in that day about 3000 souls. The Mass Movements in India, and the power of the Holy Spirit. See Chapters IV and XXXV of Things that Matter Most, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the full title of the Acts in the Authorized Version? 2. Is the book an account of the acts of the apostles? 3. Who are the two chief heroes of the book? 4. What had Jesus promised his disciples that they should do in his name? (Mk. 16.17.) 5. What is said in Deuteronomy about the duty of giving alms in connection with the offerings at the temple? (Dt. 14.28, 29; 15.7, 11; 26.12, 13.) 6. Whose was the faith to which Peter refers in verse 16? 7. By what parable did Jesus teach that true helpfulness is personal, persistent and permanent? 8. What familiar word of Paul's tells us that helping others is fulfilling Christ's law? (Gal. 6.2.) 9. What is the connection between religion and philanthrophy? 10. How may a spirit of superiority or patronage spoil a helpful deed? 11. Has the best help that has been given you come from the gift of money? 12. Instead of giving alms to beggars and the afflicted, what is now being done for them? 13. What has been done for those crippled in the Great War?

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PETER AND JOHN HEAL A LAME MAN

Golden Text

Freely ye received, freely give. Matthew 10.8

LESSON Acts 3 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 35

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Matthew 10.7, 8; Mark 1.29-34; 9.27; Luke 4.40; John 14.12; 1 Peter 4.11

ACTS 3.1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. 2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. 8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. 14 But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, 15 and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Promise of Power
Peter
Points to the
Provider of the Power
Put to the Proof

I. THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE, verses 1-10. Nine in the morning and three in the afternoon were the hours fixed by law (Ex. 29.41) for sacrifice and prayer. It was at *the ninth hour,* or three in the afternoon, when *Peter and John were going up into the temple* to pray, when *a certain man lame from birth,* now forty years old (Acts 4.22) was being carried, as was his daily wont, to his place *at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.* All the people of Jerusalem must have known this beggar well: "He was part of their city landscape, they knew him as they knew the carved columns of the temple doorway."

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. The man was accustomed to sit there begging, and not expecting to receive charity from every worshipper, he probably glanced indifferently at the two apostles. Peter would rivet the man's attention upon himself and arouse his expectations. And the beggar *gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.* Then said Peter, *Silver and gold have I none.* He is the poor man who must say, "Silver and gold have I only." *"But what I have, that give I thee,"* added Peter. *In the name*—in the power—*of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.* Recall Jesus' words to the ruler's daughter and to the widow's son, Mk. 5.41; Lk. 7.14. Jesus had promised that his disciples should do wonderful works in his name, Mk. 16.17. *Walk.* "Was this some new-discovered quality and power in themselves?" Phillips Brooks questions, and then he thinks of them as saying: "This is come to us since we had to do with Jesus. It is since we were his disciples that this new power began to stir within us." And then they must have said: "It is the same which stirred in him. Do you not remember how we used to see the same in his face which now is in ourselves? He, too, was full of pity, and loved life, and counted the loss or the defeat of life a woe, and tried to give of his own life to others." And then they came back to themselves and all was clear. All this was in them because they belonged to him. This desire and power to heal was his, not theirs. He was the spring and fountain out of which the divine water flowed. They were only the channels down which it flowed to its result.

Peter then *took* the man *by the right hand and raised him up.* "There are men who have ceased to believe in the Bible and in all existing religious organizations, but no one has yet been found who does not believe in a strong and uplifting hand. We shall have a new Book of the Acts when the Church goes back to the Gate Beautiful and gets a fresh glimpse of the gospel as preached by the apostolic band"(C. E. Jefferson). *And immediately*—this is one of Luke's favorite words; it occurs often in his Gospel—*his feet and his ankle-bones received strength.* "The Greek words here for *ankle-bones* are those that a doctor would use in describing a patient, and make one of those minute coincidences which go to prove that Luke the physician was the author of the Acts." *And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God.*

II. PETER ASCRIBED THE CURE TO JESUS THE CHRIST, verses 11-16. All the people *were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened* to the lame man. Perhaps because he was excited, as has been suggested, but more probably because, like the demoniac whom Jesus freed (Mk. 5.18), the man would not part from the apostles. *And as he held Peter and John all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.* When Peter saw their amazement *he answered unto the people.* This word *answered* is often used in the New Testament where no question has been asked, the answer being to the evident thought of the listeners. *Why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?* "God's work can only be done in and by God's strength; therefore, work done well will not be our work, but God working in us"(Andrew Murray).

The God of our fathers hath glorified his Servant Jesus. To this expression many interpretations have been given, but it seems obviously to refer to the miracle which God had wrought through the apostles of Jesus, and which, therefore glorified him; compare Jesus' use of the same word when he was told of Lazarus' sickness: "This sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," John 11.4. *Whom ye delivered up*—to Pilate, through their rulers. It was in this very porch where they were talking that Jesus had marvelously escaped stoning: John 10.23, 31, 39. *And denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him.* See Mt. 27.24, 25; Mk. 15.15; Lk. 23.14-16; Jn. 19.4. *But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted you.* See Mt. 27.16-23; Lk. 23.2; Jn. 19.15. *And killed the Prince of life.* The marginal rendering is *Author of Life.* The same Greek word is translated *author* in Hebrews 2.10, and 12.2(R. V.) "They preferred the life-taker to the life-giver"(Stock). This is one of the many great titles conferred upon the Lord by those who loved him. "Gratitude and affection shaped many a tender phrase in which to describe him, but there is

none, perhaps, more luminous or more comprehensive than this with which the impulsive Peter, facing the men who had put him to death, gave utterance of his loyalty. Its pertinence is confirmed by the word of Jesus himself, in one of the sayings in which he describes his mission: 'I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it abundantly'"(Washington Gladden).

And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong. Whether the faith was that of the lame man, who had sufficient faith to obey the command to arise and walk, or of the apostles themselves (Mt. 17.20), can not be decided.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, verse 2. The Babylonians divided the day into twelve hours, and the Greeks adopted their method. It is supposed that the Jews during their captivity also learned from the Babylonians this method of computing time. The daylight between sunrise and sunset was divided into twelve equal parts, and of course the length of each part, or hour, unlike ours, which are always of the same length, varied according to the season, being much longer in the summer than in the winter. We must remember that in those days there were no clocks to measure time. Whether the Jews used sundials, or water clocks, or some other contrivance we do not know.

Dr. Abbott reminds us that the maintenance of special hours of prayer, borrowed from the Jews, was continued in the Christian church and increased to seven daily occasions, and that these are still observed, in theory if not in practice, by the Romish clergy. The literal observance of the entire prescribed service would occupy nearly the entire twenty-four hours.

A certain man was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple to ask alms of them that entered into the temple, verse 2. Visitors to Palestine will have no difficulty in visualizing this scene. The lame and the blind, the poor and the diseased, are sitting around every church door soliciting alms. The blind are led and the lame are sometimes literally "carried" on the shoulders of some obliging friend to their accustomed places. It is believed that those who come from the house of prayer will be most charitable. Whether the beggars are impostors or not, few pass them by without giving them a copper piece worth about half a cent. On Friday afternoons the steps leading down to the Jews' Wailing Place at Jerusalem are so occupied by beggars of all sorts and description that one makes his way through them with difficulty. I saw many Jews giving the beggars slips of paper, and learned that they were too poor themselves to afford a gift of half a cent, and twelve of these pieces of paper were obtainable from the priests for one cent. Palestine, like all other countries of this period, had no homes for the poor and the afflicted, no hospitals or asylums.

Praising God, verse 8. This may indicate that the man was truly devout, but orientals are wont to ascribe all remarkable events, whether good or ill, directly to God.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How many followers had Jesus at his death? How many were added at Pentecost? What was the great meaning of Pentecost? What was the theme of Peter's sermon? What miracles had Peter and John seen Jesus work while they were in his school?

After Pentecost. Some months have probably passed—how many we do not know— since the events of Pentecost. The large company who on that day professed repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ have lived in close and sympathetic fellowship one with another, those having possessions voluntarily sharing them with those having none, and continually rejoicing and praising God. Day by day their numbers have increased.

Many wonders were wrought by the apostles; this one Luke narrates because of its far-reaching effects, for the cure and Peter's sermon that followed aroused the first opposition of the Jewish authorities.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of the lesson is the temple enclosure at Jerusalem. The word *temple,* you remember, was applied to the whole enclosure with its various

courts which rose terrace upon terrace—first the Court of the Gentiles, next the Court of the Women, then the Court of the Israelites, and lastly the Court of the Priests within which was the sanctuary itself. The Court of the Women (so called because women as well as men might enter) was the usual place for the worshipers, and it was always thronged at the hours of prayer.

The location of the Beautiful Gate is not definitely known. Some scholars think that it led from the city into the first Court. The majority believe it to have been the gate facing the Mount of Olives, between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, called the Gate of Nicanor. It was of beautiful Corinthian brass.

The Mosque of Omar
Built upon the Site of the Temple

Probably Peter and John and the man who had been lame entered the Court of the Women and engaged in worship, and then came back together into the outer Court, or Court of the Gentiles. Around the inside of the outer walls of this Court were porches, open only toward the Court. They were paved with marble, and their flat roofs of cedar were supported by marble columns. Solomon's Porch was on the east, and was six hundred feet long by seventy-five feet wide. It was called "Solomon's," not because it was the very one erected by Solomon, but because it was built on the great wall which Solomon had raised from the valley below, and retained the name of the porch which it replaced. Its double row of Corinthian pillars were supposed to have survived from Solomon's temple.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Peter fastened his eyes upon the lame man and said, "Look on us." Then the man gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. The man was sitting there at the door of the temple as listlessly as many a Sunday-school scholar sits before his teacher; he was expecting nothing from Peter and John, and only held out his hand for alms because that was his custom. He was quite used to not receiving anything from passers-by: some scholars are listless because they have grown accustomed to the prospect of not receiving anything worth while from the lesson teaching. Peter secured that listless man's attention at once and changed him into an alert, eager, expectant man. Listless scholars may be similarly changed by their teachers.

What gifts have you for your pupils that are far more valuable than money? What wealth of mind and heart, of knowledge and insight, of interest and love, have you in store for them? "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk," was the way in which Peter gave his great gift to the lame man; he meant that the healing power was his only as Jesus Christ gave it to him. So Jesus Christ gives you great gifts, and the purpose of his giving is that you may be prodigal in their use for others.

In teaching this lesson, aim to turn your pupils' thoughts, desires and purposes upon their own opportunities for helpfulness.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: PETER AND JOHN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In Mohammedan countries in the East there is an official called the Muezzin whose duty it is to call out the hours of prayer from the mosque. During the day and night he utters his chant from the balcony of the minaret: "Allah is most great. There is no God but Allah. Mohammed is the apostle of Allah. Come to prayer." At the sound of his voice devout followers of Mohammed drop their work and engage in prayer. Two calls to prayer are chanted during the night; at the first morning call the Muezzin adds that "Prayer is better than sleep."

The Jews had their regular hours of prayer when they went up to the temple to worship. As long as the temple stood, probably, followers of Jesus con-

tinued to take part in the services there. One day after Pentecost Peter and John were going to the temple at one of the hours of prayer. What hour was it? What gate of the temple did they approach? Why was it called Beautiful?

Peter and John Carrying on Jesus' Work. The temple gate, which was called Beautiful, was made of brass, and when the sun shone upon it, it flashed with light and became a "glory" gate. In front of this beautiful gate a group of suffering people had collected. Some were blind, others were sick, and among them was a poor cripple. He had been lame forty years, all his life, and begging was his only means of livelihood. Every day he was carried to this spot, and here he sat and held out his hands to all who passed him on their way into the temple.

When Peter and John appeared on the scene the man asked them for alms. They stopped and listened to his plea. "What would Christ do if he were here?" thought Peter. "What would Christ have us do in his name?" Christ had often healed the sick and made the lame to walk, and Peter believed that it was Christ's will that this man should be made strong.

The man wanted money, and Peter had none. But Peter had other gifts better for him than money. Freely he gave them, as he himself had freely received so much from Christ. First, he gave the man sympathy, showing it by his looks and by the tones of his voice, as he said, "Look on us." The man was all expectancy. Then what did Peter say? Peter thus gave Christ to the man, reminding him of Jesus of Nazareth, recalling to his mind all that he had ever heard of Christ. Next he gave a wonderful command, bidding him arise. What else did Peter do? What happened to the man? How did he show his joy? Whom did he praise? Why were the people surprised?

How was the miracle wrought? There were wonderful happenings among the soldiers in the Great War. Men who were blinded, or had become deaf and dumb, under great excitement or suspense, suddenly recovered sight, or hearing, or speech. But it was not excitement that made the crippled limbs of that man strong. Nor was it the apostle's sympathy or force of will. It was not by his own power or godliness, as he himself said. To what did Peter attribute the cure? It was done through faith. Peter believed Christ could and would do it. The man believed, too, and showed it by his prompt obedience to the command. By faith in his name hath his name made this man strong.

Freely ye Received, Freely Give. Who spoke these words of our Golden Text? How did Peter obey them? Silver and gold had he none, but what he had, that gave he to the man. We may not always have the money we would like to give to those in need, but we do have other gifts for them. We have hearts capable of love and brotherliness, and we have brains and eyes, hands and feet, to use in helping the needy. You can't subscribe to a good cause, perhaps, but you can do collecting; you can't pay your father's bills, but you can give him a quiet and loving home; you can't help the lame man, but you can tell some one who can. We have all of us something to give in answer to the cry for help.

Silver and Gold Have I None; but What I Have, That Give I thee. She was only a poor, plain, freckled woman, yet day by day, as she busily plied her iron, many a humble neighbor would stop by her door to listen to the quaint old hymns she sang so vigorously.

"My good woman," said Mrs. G——, who had called to engage her services, "how can you stand all day in this hot room, always ironing, and yet sing so cheerily?"

"Ah," she replied, "the Lord has given me this work to do; so, when I'm tired and out of sorts I say to myself that verse about doing things heartily, as unto the Lord, and try to think how I'd feel if I could see him standing by my side and he knew I had an unwilling heart for his tasks. Then I sing my brightest hymns, and while my iron smooths out the wrinkles in the clothes I'm planning how to smooth out the rough places in my neighbors' lives.

"There's poor Granny Jones, left alone all day. She's crippled with rheumatics, and nearly blind, too. When I sing it cheers her a bit, and she feels as if some one cared for her.

"Little Tommy Greene, in the room above me, has a weakness in his back, and lies in his cot bed from morning to night. His mother works in a factory and doesn't come home till dark. When he's lonely and sick with pain, he

pounds on the floor with a stick, and I sing the hymns he likes best, and he lies quiet and hums them over to himself till he falls asleep. Then once in awhile I slip up with a cup of water, and bits of picture papers that come wrapped around the clothes, and give him a pleasant word. Ah, ma'am, the Lord's so good to me I must try to help them that have few blessings."

And this thankful woman lived in a little hot room, spending her whole life ironing and smoothing out wrinkles for others. "What shall we render unto the Lord for all his mercies to us?"—Christian Life.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Acts 3.6.

One smile can glorify a day,
One word new hope impart;
The least disciple need not say
There are no alms to give away
If love be in the heart.—Phœbe Cary.

Every deed of love and mercy, done to man, is done to Me.—Van Dyke.

Do the work that's nearest,
Tho it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when we meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles.—Charles Kingsley.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Book of the Acts? 2. How many followers of Jesus were there in Jerusalem at the time of our lesson? 3. Why were Peter and John arrested? 4. What did they do after they were freed? 5. How many times is the word *boldness* used in this fourth chapter? 6. Who spoke the words of our Golden Text? 7. Need one go to war in order to be courageous? 8. What deed can you remember of having done which required great courage? 9. How can we be brave to do the right?

Note-Book Work. The Lesson Title; the place; the characters; the deed; a lesson for you; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE HELPING HAND

Additional Material: Mark 1.31; 9.27; Luke 4.40.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The two great friends, Peter and John, as well as the other apostles, still worshiped in the temple, for they had no thought of separating themselves from their nation and its religious observances. What happened one day as they were entering the temple at the afternoon time of prayer?

Freely ye Have Received, Freely Give. During the armistice one of America's foremost surgeons who was a major in a military hospital near New York was asked if he intended to leave the army at once and resume his practice.

The major smiled and shook his head. "Let me tell you a story," he said. "The other day there came to our hospital a contingent of wounded from France among whom I worked. Finally I came to a youngster whose leg was in a cast. I could see he was suffering agony in spite of the little, crooked brave smile with which he answered my questions. He said they had fixed him up at a base hospital in France and that all through the trip over his leg had hurt him so that he couldn't sleep. 'It's all right though,' he said. 'I guess I can stand it, and maybe in a few years the pain will wear away,' and the helpless, awful look came into his eyes again, though his lips still kept their pitiful, crooked little smile. Get what I'm telling you, now—he was contemplating years of torture and he smiled! I made up my mind to do everything I could for that boy and looked him over myself. I found that in the hurry and crowd in France his cast had been put on poorly and had twisted his poor leg around and held it there. To make sure of the job this time I did every bit of it myself—took off the old cast, fixed the wound, measured and adjusted the new one and saw him tucked up in his cot. The next morning, going through the ward, I stopped at his bed. He didn't say a word as he looked at me—he just smiled, and I tell you the difference between this smile and the one he had shown me yesterday brought a lump into my throat. I made up my mind right then and there that if I had been given the power to bring a smile like that to the face of even one of our

boys there wasn't money enough in the United States to make me quit this job until there isn't one lad left who needs me."

The Helping Hand.

"No lands nor gold do I hold in fee;
Naught can I give the world," said he,
But many a heart as he passed along
Was cheered by the lilt of his merry song;
While hapless wanderers gone astray,
Were guided back to the better way;
And eyes that were dimmed with tears the while
Would flash once more in an answering smile.
"The rarest gifts to be given away
Are neither lands nor gold," said they.
—Dixie Wolcott, in Lippincott's.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. When thou seest misery in thy brother's face, let him see mercy in thine eye.—Quarles.

He is the poor man who can say, Silver and gold have I only.

The sympathy you hesitated to offer because it was all you had at hand was the thing most needed by your struggling friend.—O. P. Fitzgerald.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. By whom was Acts written? 2. What do we know about Luke? 3. Why did the authorities object to the healing of the lame man? 4. In the trial who were the judges? 5. The prisoners? 6. What was the charge? 7. What was the defense? 8. What was the verdict? 9. What was the result? 10. Why were Peter and John right in their attitude to the Sanhedrin? 11. Why did the Sanhedrin want to silence Peter and John? 12. What was the result of Peter's boldness? 13. Contrast Peter's cowardly denial with his brave avowal here. 14. How does Paul say in Eph. 6.13 we can gain courage to do the right?

Note-Book Work. At the Beautiful Gate.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: HELPING MEN TO HELP THEMSELVES Or, PETER'S MINISTRY TO A LAME MAN

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Pentecost had been marvelous indeed, when through the power of the Divine Spirit, Peter had so witnessed for the Lord that thousands were led to become Christ's followers. But Pentecost could not last always, and at the very beginning of the Christian Church, as in the centuries since then, the normal way in which the church grew was "one by one."

We hear today of a lame man being brought to the knowledge of Christ's saving power. Did the disciples work many miracles after Pentecost? Why was this miracle of the cure of the cripple so fully recorded?

In the operating-room of a Chinese mission hospital this prayer hangs on the wall: "All-powerful Lord of Heaven! This, thy child, who is before thee, is sick. We, thy servants, ask thee for skilful hands and for wisdom to relieve pain and cure his body, in order that some day he may understand the love and mercy of his Heavenly Father and return thanks to thee and come to serve thee. We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ the Savior. Amen!" Peter might have offered this very prayer as he looked down that day upon that man sitting at the temple gate. To whom did Peter ascribe his cure? What else is striking in Peter's words to the wondering crowd?

There are Some Things which Silver and Gold Cannot Do. They can do so much. They seem to do almost everything. Even health they can sometimes buy. They can command service and pleasure and freedom from care. But they cannot do all things. There is an affecting scene in The Heart of Midlothian after Effie Deans has been taken a prisoner for her crime. Her little home is overwhelmed with the horror and shame of it, and the Laird of Dumbiedykes draws out his purse, laden with gold, and exclaims, "Jeannie, woman! it's sad work, but siller will help it." "Davie," he questions, "winna siller do't?" But silver and gold can not mend a broken heart.

Arise and Walk. The winter had been a hard one. Long-continued financial depression had reduced the ability of people to give, and at the same time had increased the frequency of the calls for money. The minister was troubled. He feared lest people should dread to come to church on account of the con-

stant appeals for aid, yet on the other hand there was a great and growing need. One Sunday morning he gave out the notices for the week, and then, after a pause, continued, "I have said to myself a dozen times of late that I would bring to you no special appeals, no matter how pressing, for our regular charities must be maintained, and many of you are already overburdened.

"I am not willing that you should think me unmindful of the burdens you are bearing, or heedlessly insistent in pressing other claims upon your benevolence. But I have just received an appeal, signed by the secretary of our local board of charities, calling attention to the case of a poor boy in the village of Millburn. Two years ago he lost both of his feet by freezing. He has been abused all his life, and since his misfortune he has been treated with added inhumanity by his parents. At last he has been sent to the almshouse to protect him from those who should be his protectors. If he had artificial feet he could become self-supporting; as it is, the only way in which he can move is by creeping on his hands and knees.

"My brethren, I ask you to work a modern miracle. The Gospel of Christ is given to men that they may be lifted up and made to stand erect. Let us put this young man on his feet. That day when Peter found a man at the temple gate, lame and unable to walk, he said to him, 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!'

"This boy whom we have never seen sits at our temple door today. With us is the God-given power of helping him. Let us say to him, 'Silver and gold have we, one hundred dollars; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!'"

Then came the sermon, and after that the closing hymn and benediction, and the morning was blessed to many a man because of his purpose to help in so good a work.

The minister and his hearers were right. It was not from their own point of view that they had spoken, but from that of the cripple. They had lifted him up and made him to walk erect. To him, at least, the deed was in very truth a miracle. And here is the thought for every giver in the name of Christ to keep in his heart—not "What does this gift mean to me?" but "What does it mean to the suffering brother to whom I give it?" It is a thought that will work other miracles.—Youth's Companion.

Of Which One Do You Approve? The train stopped at a seaside station, and a pale girl, who coughed incessantly, alighted. A young woman with a brogue and kind, merry face ran to meet her.

"Ah, an' it's welcome ye are, my dear! Take me arms. It's just a step. There it is—that white cottage on the beach. It was all planned and built by Miss Hayes. She keeps it up. From April to November there are ten of her friends there gettin' rested and strong. They each stay two weeks. Faith, an' that's a tiresome cough! We'll be gettin' rid of that at wance, plase God!"

"You are so kind. I know you'll make me well," said the poor shop-girl, smiling.

"Is it me? It's Miss Hayes as'll cure you. I'm only her Irish chambermaid. I wish I could do some good meself; but I haven't a rid cent to give. My money all goes back to the ould folks in the ould country; but Miss Hayes's father—he's millions! She can help the poor!" and Molly's blue eyes filled with tears. She walked slowly, her arm around the sick woman's waist.

"You'll have a wee room all to yourself. I'll make you crame toast for tay—I'm foine on crame toast!" she ran on cheerily.

"Is that Miss Hayes in the door? Why, she is a young woman!" said the startled newcomer, as a slight girl advanced briskly to meet her.

"Ah? You are Jane Potts?" glancing at a list in her hand. "I hope you will enjoy your holiday, Jane. You will stay until this day two weeks. A copy of the Home rules is in your chamber. Tea is at six, precisely. All lights must be out at ten, to the minute. Tomorrow morning I will see you and examine into your situation, habits and so on. I always exercise an oversight over the families, work and life of my women. You must go to your room now and rest."

"But I am not one of her women!" said the girl hotly, as she climbed the stairs. Molly heaped the pillows on her bed, brought her a cordial which checked the cough, and with affectionate pats bade her sleep until tea-time.

Molly looked after her mistress with reverence. God, she thought, had

given her a great work to do for him. "An' what can I do that has no money at all?" she thought, shaking her head.

This little picture needs no words of ours to explain its meaning.—Youth's Companion.

Other Ways of Treating the Cripple. Ah, here comes one Hopeless, sad-eyed, and muttering scraps of science, "In the name of the survival of the fittest, thou art damned. Weak thou art, and to the wall thou shalt go." And this is Mr. Rigidly Righteous, with knitted brow and stern lips: "Who shall pity thee? Thy own sin hath brought thee here. Evil hast thou done, and the penalty thou must pay." Here, too, comes Miss Philanthropy, with her good-natured smile and easy ways: 'Silver and gold will I give thee: another crutch, better and stronger, for thee to hobble along with." And there is another, who, with his little load of petty maxims, might have dwelt in Bunyan's village of Morality: "In the name of Morality, in the name of Social Respectability, in thy own name stand upon thy feet, walk, be good: henceforth sin no more."—George Jackson, in First Things First.

Helping Cripples to Help Themselves. The truth of Shakespeare's words:

> There is a soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out,

has been proved in regard to that monstrous evil thing, the Great War. One of them is our changed attitude toward a cripple. As the maimed soldiers were discharged from the hospitals, the world asked, "What can be done to utilize such men?" Formerly a government bestowed a pension and possibly a medal upon the maimed. The medal and pension were quite inadequate as a means of support, and the pensioner was more or less dependent upon relations or was forced to seek modest employment as watchman or street-vendor. Now governments have a sense of responsibility for those maimed in the service of their country. The desire and purpose have come to be, not merely to ameliorate their sufferings or privations, but to "make the maimed whole."

The whole problem has been worked out scientifically. First, there has been the work of surgical reconstruction. New arms, new legs and various other mechanical contrivances have been supplied. Then a psychological side received attention. Discouragement had to be overcome, ambition aroused. This is what has been said to the crippled: "If you will yourself help to the best of your ability, we will so train you that your handicap will not prove a serious disadvantage; we will prepare you for a job at which you can earn as much as in your previous position." And then in trade-schools and schools of all sorts, through "re-education" the man has been enabled to hold his place in his own right, by his own ability.

"I have both arms off, my right arm is taken off at the shoulder joint, and of the left arm I have only a three inch stump. But I am farming one hundred and eighty acres, plowing corn with a riding cultivator, hauling everything, driving the binder when cutting oats, the mower when cutting hay, driving a car and cranking it with my feet." Does not that seem as marvelous as the walking and leaping of the cripple at the Gate Beautiful?

The Invaluable Gifts that it is in the Power of Man to Give to Man. We all feel that it is disgraceful for a man to be very rich and give nothing away, but we look complacently enough at the man who makes his culture a mere selfish luxury. But surely to give a man an idea is better than to give him a dollar, unless he is starving and needs something to eat upon the spot. And if you who have no money to give away but have been trained to careful study, to serious and thoughtful lives, only knew it, you have a power of charity that no millionaire possesses.

This is one sort of charity which is far above money. But take another. Higher than intelligence or knowledge, as a gift from man to man, is moral inspiration. A poor broken man comes to you when your purse is empty, and you are just going out to earn something for yourself, and you succeed in making him feel that it is better to earn than to beg; you succeed in touching the rusty key of his independence, and he goes back with a refreshed manhood, determined to help himself. Tell me, is there any comparison between what you have done for him and what you would have done if you could have filled his pockets with gold, and feasted his hunger off of silver dishes? And so to reawaken the sense of purity in a gross, licentious nature, to stir the impulse of honor in a crawl-

ing sycophant, to make a coward courageous or a scoffer reverent—these are greater gifts than money.

And then, thirdly, comes sympathy! He who gives sympathy makes some personal bestowal of himself, of his own strength, his own life, into the weakness and deadness that he tries to help. It is indeed a wondrous gift for man to give to man.

But this is not all. If he has God, if he has taken Christ into his nature so that his life is a continual following of the Lord's, then see what a power of benefaction that man may have. Whoever by a Christian word he speaks or by a Christian life he lives, brings a new soul to see the perfect Life and take the perfect Grace, has poured out of his full hands a blessing on his brother that leaves utterly out of sight any gift that riches can bestow on poverty.

Intelligence, inspiration, comfort, religion—these are the things which men are needing everywhere. Ignorant, spiritless, wretched, Christless lives are all about us. As much as these needs of theirs outgo their need of wealth, so much does the bounty that supplies these needs surpass the bounty that should simply spread their tables and fill their purses.

"Give us bread," the people cried, as they followed Christ from place to place. "Nay, I am the bread," he answerd, "take and eat." "Give me water," begged the woman of Samaria, "that I need not come to the well to draw." "The water that I shall give him shall be in Him," Christ replied. He gave no money anywhere. What we call charity he could not give, silver and gold had he none. But knowledge such as he gave to Nicodemus, inspiration such as he bestowed on the apostles, comfort such as he brought into the cottage at Bethany, the way to the Father as he opened it wide to the multitudes in the temple, these he was always giving. Himself, his divine self, he lavished on all who would receive him.

I have tried to open the door of charity to some to whom it has seemed to be shut tight. I am sure that there are many who as they go in and out at the beautiful gate of the temple of a happy life are deeply oppressed at the sight of the many who lie crippled and miserable outside. Silver and gold have they none. I have tried to show that there are other things to give. Your intelligence, your principles, your comfort, your religion—in one word, yourself.—Condensed from New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. *At the hour of prayer.* There was always a place in the lives of the apostles for communion with God. Prayer had an "hour," a definite time and place in their program of living. Their Master always had his hours of prayer. Have we?

2. Modern medical missions.

3. The signs that follow the missionary today have just as much evidence of a divine presence and of divine forces at work with him as those seen by the early Church. When we hear of some bitter Moslem turning to worship the Son of God, or some proud Brahmin counting all things lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, or some poor pagan cleansed from loathsome vice and superstition, are we not face to face with facts which are just as truly "signs and wonders" as those which were wrought in Apostolic times? And they can easily be explained in the same way.—H. E. Fox.

4. Red Cross activities in the interest of humanity.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What reasons are there for believing that Luke wrote the Acts? 2. What do we know about Luke? 3. Who composed the Sanhedrin? 4. What were the powers of the Sanhedrin? 5. For what saying is Caiaphas noted? (Jn. 18.14.) 6. Describe the Sanhedrin at a trial. 7. How did Peter throw the Sanhedrin on the defensive? 8. What is the meaning of verse 11? Where in the Gospels is it quoted? 9. What is the result of the threats of the Council? 10. Should the opinions of men have weight with us? 11. How did Daniel show that he feared God and not men? (Dan. 1.1-21.) 12. Contrast Peter denying his Lord with Peter proclaiming him in the face of threats and opposition: what has made the difference? 13. How often does Acts record the boldness of Paul? (Concordance.) 14. What has been the effect of persecution upon modern churches?

Court 160 B

THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN

Golden Text

Stand fast in the faith, quit you
like men, be strong. 1 Cor. 16.13

LESSON ACTS 4.1-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 124

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Matthew 5.10-12; Acts 5.12-42; 20.22-24; 2 Timothy 4.6-8, 16-18; Hebrews 11.32-38.

ACTS 4.8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, 9 if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; 10 be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. 12 And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. 21 And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

A Good Deed Arrest
Glorious Devotion Leads to the Bold Words of the Disciples
Great Dilemma Discharge

I. PETER AND JOHN ARRESTED AND BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN, verses 1-7.

II. PETER'S BOLD WORDS, verses 8-12. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit.* "That is the explanation of the boldness: it is Peter plus the Infinite! The word *filled* is a picturesque word. It was the word that was used when the net was crammed with fishes. It was the word used when a substance had been steeped and soaked in the dye, and every strand and thread in the fabric had received the requisite hue. They were filled with the Spirit like a crammed net: every tissue and fibre in mind and heart and soul was steeped in the Spirit, and dyed into one all-pervasive and heavenly hue"(Jowett). Recall the promises made by Jesus to the disciples, Lk. 12.11, 12; 21.14, 15; Mk. 13.11.

Peter said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders. Rulers and elders and scribes, Annas and Caiaphas, verses 5, 6. The rulers were the chief priests; the elders were the representatives in the Sanhedrin of the people; the scribes were the professional expounders of the law. Most of the scribes were Pharisees. *If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole.* They were forced like criminals to defend themselves. See verses 1-7 and compare Jesus' question in Jn. 10.32. This infirm man is the lame man of our last lesson.

Be it known unto you all that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. The reason for their arrest lay in the fact that the rulers were "sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead," verse 2, and yet Peter, after boldly accusing them of having crucified the Christ, ascribes the miracle to the Risen Christ. *He is the stone which was set at nought,* regarded as of no account, despised, *of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner.* See Ps. 118.22. Jesus quoted these same words as referring to himself, Mt. 21.42-44. The stone made the head of the corner is the stone at the angle of two walls, supporting and uniting them. Instead of this figure of the corner stone, that of the keystone would perhaps have been used had the arch been in common use. The use of the arch for bridges originated with the Romans.

"Thou art my salvation" are the words which in the Psalm precede the words here quoted in verse 11, and Peter continues: *And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven*—in all the earth, as we should say—*that is given among men, wherein we must be saved. We* in the Greek has an emphatic position at the end of the sentence, as has also *Ye* in verse 7. By what name have ye, ignorant men, done this? There is no other name wherein we,—you the judges and we the fishermen—must be saved. Here is the answer to those who claim that Christianity need not be offered to the followers of Buddha or Confucius or Mahomet.

III. THE QUANDARY OF THE SANHEDRIN, verses 13-17. *Now when they beheld the boldness* (the Greek word translated *boldness* means literally *free-speaking*) *of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.* The Greek ἀγράμματοι, translated *unlearned,* means *without letters;* the apostles were untrained as rabbis. The Greek word ἰδιῶται, translated *ignorant,* means *private* persons, not engaged in public office, common people: perhaps our word *laymen* would give the actual thought of the rulers here. In Greece any man of ability shared in the public life and looked with scorn upon one who remained a "private person." *And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* Some scholars interpret this to mean merely that "their wonder sharpened their recollection," as Meyer says, and now, apparently for the first time, they recognize them as disciples of Jesus. Yet recalling the words of the Jews in regard to Jesus—How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (John 7.15)—it seems rather that they recognized the fact that Peter and John had grown like their Master. What a compliment they paid Jesus in thus admitting that the disciples had caught from Jesus the contagion of courage! The Greek verb ἐσαν, translated *had been* is in the imperfect tense. Dr. James W. Thirtle suggests that there is no need of rendering it "they had been"; that there is more of actuality in "they were." The apostles were recognized then and there as being with Jesus, i. e. of the Jesus' party. In like manner, we today are reported to agree in the judgments and practices of others—to be "with them." To the Sanhedrin it was immaterial whether the apostles "had been" with Jesus; it was enough for them that the men *were with him.*

And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. They could not dispute the fact of the cure nor answer the arguments of Peter. Probably it was their practice to send away a prisoner while they held their discussions, so now Peter and John were sent *aside out of the council.* What must we do with these men? they questioned. As at the trial of Jesus, the Sanhedrin were concerned, not with the truth, but with what they deemed policy for themselves. They couldn't deny the miracle, but they could seek to stop the report of the miracle, "as if that healing were a plague begun, the contagion of which must be stopped," Matthew Henry observes. So they decided to threaten the apostles.

The apostles were recalled, and the Sanhedrin *charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.* Peter did not question whether to obey the command of the Sanhedrin would be expedient for himself, but he asked, *Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God,* and added, *Judge ye.* He was respectful to his judges, and made an appeal to their consciences. Compare Acts 5.29. *For we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard,* concluded Peter. Compare 1 Cor. 9.16. "How magnificent the response! They felt their wills to be caught in the sweeping current of the Infinite!" (Jowett). "Tell the birds amidst the bursts of spring not to sing; tell the waters welling from the depths not to flow; tell the happy child not to laugh and jump; tell sun and stars not to shine; and when these have obeyed you, then tell the soul which has been baptized with the love of God that it must not speak of him, and it will laugh you to scorn. It cannot but speak what it has seen and heard" (Meyer). *And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done.*

IV. THE DISCIPLES UNITE IN PRAISE AND PRAYER, verses 23-31.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

When they had set them in the midst, verse 7. Peter and John, and the man who had been lame, stood facing the members of the Sanhedrin who sat in a semi-circle. In the midst of the semi-circle, on elevated seats, were the officers—the patriarch or president, the father of the house of judgment, or vice-president, and the sage, or referee—while the members themselves sat on low cushions, with their knees bent and crossed in the usual oriental manner. In front of the Sanhedrin sat three rows of disciples. Two scribes, or notaries, one on each side, faced the council; the one registered the reasons for acquittal of prisoners; the other, the reasons for condemnation.

The stone which was set at nought of you the builders, verse 11. The riches hid below the surface of the earth belonged to the Emperor. All quarries were managed and worked by his own private officers for his private purse. Every block that was quarried was inspected by the proper officer, and marked by him as approved. Our knowledge of the subject has been for the most part derived from blocks actually found in Rome, and which, therefore, were choice blocks sent to the capital. But at the Phrygian marble quarries there have been found many blocks, which had been cut, but not sent on to Rome. These are never marked as approved; and some of them bear the letters REPR, i. e. *reprobatum,* "rejected." These were considered as imperfect and unworthy pieces, and rejected by the inspector.—Sir William M. Ramsey, in Pauline and Other Studies in Early Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When had Peter and John heard from the lips of the Master that they were to bear witness concerning him? What had he promised them in regard to the receiving of power? When had they borne their testimony? What did Peter say in his sermon at Pentecost? Who did he say should be saved? How did he show courage in that sermon? How did he show courage in his words to the people after the curing of the lame man? What had Jesus said would happen to the apostles after his death?

The Result of Peter's Witnessing. In his first sermon, on the great day of Pentecost, Peter ascribed to Christ the coming of the Holy Spirit and appealing to the conscience of his hearers, aroused their sense of guilt in having crucified their King. Three thousand were converted and joined the Christian fellowship. In his second sermon, after the healing of the lame man, Peter ascribed the miracle to faith in the power of Jesus Christ, again accused the people of guilt in crucifying him, and appealed to them to accept him as the One who fulfilled their hopes, the One promised to their fathers and foretold by their prophets. Many more believed and their conversion then brought the number of Christ's followers to five thousand.

The Arrest. Peter's second address was abruptly broken off by the coming of Christ's enemies. Hitherto the rulers had paid no heed to the work of the

apostles. Either they did not not know or they ignored the many wonders and signs wrought by the apostles and the growing numbers who believed in the Nazarene, but now the attention of priests, the captain of the temple and Sadducees, was drawn to the great concourse of people in Solomon's Porch. They were greatly offended at Peter's preaching, for the Sadducees did not believe in the immortality of the soul, and in proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus, Peter was preaching this doctrine. They arrested the two apostles, and because it was evening, time for the guards to close the temple gates and too late for a trial, they put the two in prison for the night. The first of the long line of persecutions was begun.

The arrest took place at "eventide," which was usually reckoned from 6 p. m. The hours between that and the healing of the lame man, at 3 p. m., must have been occupied by the preaching of which we have only a summary.

The Trial and Afterwards. Peter and John stand as prisoners in the presence of the Sanhedrin, the great Jewish tribunal at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had been brought after his arrest, the one called the high priest, the other the actual high priest, Alexander and John, and other great officials are present. "By what power or in what name have ye done this?" the court asks. Peter's courageous answer is our lesson. When they were released, after being commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, the two apostles went at once to their own company, told them what had happened, and prayed for power to do just what they had been commanded not to do, to speak with boldness. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After their arrest in Solomon's Porch the apostles were put in prison during the night, and in the morning were brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. The meeting-place of the Sanhedrin had been a hall called *Gazith,* the Hall of Hewn Stone, within the temple area, on the south side of the Court of the Priests, but it is thought that at this time they met in a hall on Mount Moriah outside the temple precincts.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The children in your midst are watching and taking notes of you, your personality, your example. Is your image in their minds all that you could wish it to be? The novelist Dostoevsky bids you "every day and every hour, every minute, walk round yourself, and see that your image is a seemly one." The rulers took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus—to such an extent was the image of their Master reflected in their lives. It is not merely by his words but by the manifestation of his life that a teacher commends both himself and his mission to those whom he teaches. A teacher is a lesson the scholar never forgets. No photographic plate is more sensitive to the image that the sun paints upon it than is the child's intelligence to the teacher's example. Nor is it children only who are influenced by the teacher's personality. It was in a Bible Class in India that a Hindu student was asked how he thought that Jesus would come into the room if he were to visit them and replied, "I think he would come in just as Larsen comes into our class." You are conscientious in the preparation of your lesson, wise and skilful in teaching, zealous in organizing your class, and all this is good, for all this should be done, but when it is all done and done well, it will not avail if the truth is not incarnate in you, if you have not been with Jesus yourself.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: PETER AND JOHN STANDING FOR JESUS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, was put in prison because he preached the Gospel, and was threatened with banishment from the country if, on his release, he continued to preach. But he said to his persecutors, "If I were out of prison today, I would preach the Gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God."

Because they preached the Gospel after the cure of the lame man, Peter and John were put in prison over night, and then brought before the Great Court

for a trial. Let us see how they accepted the command not to preach again after their release.

Peter and John Standing for Jesus. Peter and John were bold. Don't you think so? They stood for Jesus and gave him credit for the miracle of healing the lame man at the Gate Beautiful. They told the enemies of Jesus that he was living and that he had done this marvelous thing. They charged those men with having murdered Christ. And they did it all well knowing that they might be sent back to prison and to death. That surely was boldness.

We have read many stories of boldness these last few years, of how men sailed their planes in the teeth of a gale, captured Germans single-handed, went over the top through showers of machine gun "bullets" and fought the enemy to the last man. It is all fine and thrilling. But the courage of Peter and John was quite as great. Indeed, many a man who can face bayonets would have flinched in their position.

We are not surprised at John. He was always true to Christ. You remember, I am sure, how he went down to the Judgment Hall with him, and stood by his cross. But Peter had played the coward, and yet here he is playing the hero's part and boldly daring the fury of Christ's enemies. It was a wonderful change.

Whence had their courage sprung? *From companionship with Jesus.* His enemies "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Jesus had been bold, and they had caught his spirit. He had never feared man, and they knew they need not, either. *From a clear conscience.* They had done no wrong to anyone, but had done a great good to one man. What did Peter say about the charge against them? They were on trial because of a good deed done to an afflicted man. *From a great conviction* that they must obey God no matter what men said or did. And then they loved Jesus, and *for his sake* they were willing to dare and suffer anything. Any one of these things would tend to make men quit themselves like men, make them strong, but when they have all of them the greatest possible peril will not make them afraid.

Boldness is needed today. We must have courage if we live life aright. Temptation and difficulty and suffering will come and you must meet them. But can you? Are you afraid that when the time comes you will fail? That is the way our soldiers felt in the Great War. They feared that when they got under fire they might give way. But they did not. Nor will you, if you have what the apostles had: that knowledge of Christ, that clear conscience, that conviction, that love, will bring you through.

Peter and John made a great impression by their courage. Their enemies were influenced in spite of themselves, and the cause of Jesus was greatly helped. There are times when we serve Christ by being silent and forbearing. But there are other times when we serve him best by being brave. In the day of difficulty and trouble "to put a cheerful courage on" will do more to help Christ's cause and to help men to believe in him than all our speeches. Be brave! Have grit!

The Secret of Goodness. In a narrow street in the Holy City in the days of long ago lived old Tobiah, apothecary and seller of spices. Morning by morning while the dew sparkled on the grass and gathered in the tiny cups of the lilies Tobiah roamed over Olivet in search of rare herbs and choice flowers. And day by day he went through the city crying, "Buy sweet herbs and fragrant spices, buy today. God sends them, I gather them, buy of me."

Into the street at the sound of his call bounded Judith and Reuben, merry-hearted children of Miriam—wife of Ezra the shepherd. After Tobiah they ran, and into their hands he thrust bundles of spices, and upon their garments his perfumes he sprinkled. Tobiah loved children. At midday homeward the children wandered, radiantly happy. "Guess where we have been, mother, guess where we have been." "Ah, children," said Miriam, as the scent of the spices reached her, "so you have been with Tobiah again!" And then the wise Miriam added, "And quite right, my jewels; if you wish to be fragrant keep near to the seller of spices."

And was not that a beautiful thing to say? Keep near to the seller of spices. St. Paul said that in his own way to his Philippian friends. He told them that whenever they found anything they could reverence, anything that was pure or lovely or well spoken of, they were to fasten their mind upon it. Such things were to be the spices they were to handle every day. We become like the things we love. St. Paul knew that if these friends of his were to be good and pure

and true they must keep near to the Seller of spices. And he knew of a wonderful Seller of spices—One whose wares were "without money and without price." The Lord Jesus is that Seller of spices, and the sweetest, brightest, happiest lives are those lived closest to him.

Peter and John were simple men, yet they did wonderful things. And the reason they wanted to do them, and could do them, was "they had been with Jesus." They had been so long with him that they had become like him. And when the Jewish council looked at Peter and John, they said, "These men could never have done these things had they not been with Jesus." A lady who has a natural gift of mimicry once told me that when she was a little girl her mother could always tell with whom she had been by the manner in which she spoke when she came home. That is it. Our deeds and our words reveal with whom we have been. And is it not simply splendid to think that every lovely thing in our life—our truthfulness, our kindness, our cheerfulness, our love of right—may tell others that we, no matter how little or how lowly we may be, have been close to Jesus, just as the perfume of the spices told Miriam that her children had been with Tobiah the seller of spices?—Herbert S. Seekings, in The Expository Times.

A Malagasy who was Ordered not to Trade in the Name of Jesus. In Madagascar a Government order forbade any Malagasy in Government employ to take any part in a religious service in any of the authorized church buildings on the island. One of the native Christians affected by the new regulation was an ordinary map-maker, who was the superintendent of a mission school. He had a very good salary as Government official, but he never hesitated. He stuck to the Sunday-school till he was ordered to a place many miles away. There he found a small Sunday-school and helped it until he was fined and dismissed. Eventually he became an evangelist under the native missionary society. "I was told," he said, "to choose between God and money. My reply was, without hesitation—God."—The Sunday School Chronicle.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Acts 4.19, 20.

If you have enlisted for Christ as your Redeemer and your Master, then always and everywhere show your colors.—T. L. Cuyler.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which one of the Patriarchs was deceitful? 2. What deceitful things did he do? 3. How was he punished? 4. Why did Ananias and Sapphira try to deceive? 5. What did Jesus say in Mt. 6.1-18 about doing things to gain the approval of men? 6. Ananias does not seem to have said anything: could he tell a lie without using words? 7. What harm does a lie do to others? 8. What harm does a lie do to the one who utters it?

Note-Book Work. The Lesson Title; the occasion for Peter's words; what Peter said about Jesus; the effect upon the authorities; Peter's decision; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: COURAGE TO DO THE RIGHT

Additional Material: Acts 5.17-42.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Peter and John were not fair-weather Christians. Such Peter had seemed to be at the arrest and trial of their Lord, but at Pentecost and ever after they were steadfast and true. Persecution only fanned their loyalty to Christ into greater brightness. To see how great the change has been, let us recall two incidents in Peter's life which we studied last year. The words which follow are Dr. Jowett's:—

Here is Peter, a man who had been plastic to circumstances, a man who had received always the impress of the immediate hour, a man of fickle moods and varying whims and caprices, a man of impulse but little constancy, usually choosing the line of least resistance. Take two glimpses of this weak and impulsive man. Well, here is the Master foretelling the coming gloom and desolation and crucifixion and death. Here is the Master foretelling the chilly approach of an appalling night. And Peter said unto him, "This shall not be unto thee, Lord. Choose an easier way. Take a more prosperous path to thy Kingdom. Seek thy crown by a more comfortable road. This shall not be unto thee." And the Lord looked at Peter and said, "Get thou behind me, Satan." The spirit of

Peter shrank and recoiled from the chilling touch of sacrifice and right. I wonder how this man will fare when he comes face to face with antagonism. Here is another glimpse of Peter. The shadows have fallen, the night has come. The Master is to be tried at the dawn. In the outer court a fire is burning, and Peter stands tremblingly by to warm himself. And suddenly a servant-maid standing there caught a sight of the face of Peter in the transient glare of the fire and immediately said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." And quickly and untremblingly Peter replied: "Woman, I know not the man. I know not the man. I have never known him." I wonder how that man will fare when he comes face to face with the powerful, threatening resistance of official religion.

The Courage of Peter and John. Peter and John stand as prisoners in the presence of the great Jewish tribunal at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had been brought after his arrest, and other great officials are present. "By what power or in what name, have ye done this?" the court asks. Boldly Peter answers, for he is filled with the Holy Spirit: "Seemingly we are on trial for a good deed done to a helpless man. Know, ye rulers and all the people of Israel, that this man here stands sound and whole before you through the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead. Ye condemned Jesus as a false Messiah: by raising him from the dead God has proved him to be the true Messiah, and thus the stone which ye, the builders (because of your office) of God's spiritual house, have flung aside as worthless, has become the head of the corner, the only sure foundation on which can rest the hope of eternal life. In no one else is there salvation; no other name has been given wherein we must be saved."

Amazed the rulers listen to his words. Such plain speaking to superiors from men who are untrained in rabbinical schools, and unauthorized to teach is passing strange; it can only be accounted for, they think, by the influence of association with Jesus.

They order the prisoners removed while they consider what is best to be done. "We can not deny the miracle," they admit, "because the man that was healed is here to prove it, and it is known throughout the city. We will warn them to teach no more in the name of Jesus, and they know full well that if they disobey they may suffer the same fate that he did." Then they recall Peter and John and charge them neither to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus.

Peter first appeals to the conscience of the judges: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye," he says, and then he boldly announces their determination not to obey the command, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." Thus the rulers learn that they cannot silence the apostles, but in their helplessness because of their fear of the people they merely threaten the apostles and let them go. They return to their own company and report all that the chief priests and the elders said unto them. And they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and say, in their prayer, "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness." And when they pray, the place is shaken wherein they are gathered together; and they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they speak the word of God with boldness.

The Courage of Edith Cavell. Who has not heard of Edith Cavell, the English nurse whose patriotism counted no sacrifice too great? The sentence of death was passed upon her by the Germans in the afternoon and was carried out before the next sun arose. In those few hours her beautiful Christian spirit never once failed her. The English chaplain who administered to her the Holy Communion, found her "perfectly calm and resigned," with no more spirit of bitterness toward her executioners than had her Master whom she served. "I must have no bitterness toward anyone," she said. And this was the report of the German military chaplain who saw her when she faced the German rifles: "She was brave and bright to the last. She professed her Christian faith and said she was glad to die for her country."

A Courageous Officer. One of the bravest officers of Frederick the Great once declined the King's invitation to dinner because he wished to attend the Holy Communion. The next time this officer was at the royal table the King himself, as well as the other guests, recalled the incident and spoke mockingly of the sacred service. The officer arose, saluted the King, and told him respectfully but firmly that there was a greater King than Frederick, and that

he never allowed that King to be insulted in his presence. The guests looked on in amazement, trembling for the safety of the officer, but Frederick grasped the officer's hand and expressed his regret that he could not also believe so firmly or declare his faith so fearlessly.

During the Great War. "At one camp a Salvationist came to our hut and, getting in touch with the officer, told him he was having a big fight, and wanted his prayers. A little inquiry elicited the information that he had just arrived, and was to sleep that night in a room with several unconverted men. He wanted to be bold, he said, and take his stand from the first. Of course the officer was only too ready to help, prayed with him and for him, and sent him off. On reaching his room the man found his mates already assembled and said to them, 'Men, I am a Salvationist, and as such I am of course going to pray before I turn in!' Not a word was said, and our man dropped on his knees, but instead of praying silently he prayed aloud! Nothing happened till next night, when, on returning to the sleeping quarters, our man was greeted by one of the men who, speaking for the others, said, 'Matey, we've been waiting for you; we want you to pray with us before we turn in!'"

Sentence Sermons to Remember. If you want your neighbor to know what the Christian spirit will do for him, let him see what it has done for you.—Henry Ward Beecher.

I am resolved that no misrepresentations, falsehoods, or calumny shall make me swerve from what I conceive to be the strict line of duty.—George Washington.

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.—Emily Brontë.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When was the Book of Acts written? 2. What was Luke's purpose in writing the book? 3. Tell the story of the sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. 10.1-11.) 4. Tell the story of the sin and punishment of Achan. (Josh. 7.) 5. Tell the story of Gehazi's falsehood and punishment. (2 K. 5.20-27.) 6. Why was the punishment so severe in those ancient times? 7. Was the lie of Ananias spoken or acted? 8. Of Sapphira? 9. What was Ananias' motive in his deception? 10. What does Prov. 11.1 say about deceitfulness? 11. What effect upon the growth of church had the punishment meted out to Ananias and Sapphira? (Acts 5.13, 14.) 12. Can one lie in any other way than by speech? 13. What is the difference between a "black lie" and a "white lie"? 14. What effect upon the character has the habit of indulging in "white lies"? 15. What effect upon the reputation does it have?

Note-Book Work. Before the Sanhedrin.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE APOSTLES' COURAGE IN A CRUCIAL HOUR Or, THE NEED AND SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN COURAGE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. While Dr. Jowett was a pastor in New York City, visitors to the metropolis from all parts of our country had the pleasure of hearing him, and I hope that privilege was yours. He is one of the world's greatest preachers. His message is always simple and direct, and always rings true. Well said one of his hearers, "You may know where he has been to get it." Yes, we may know as the members of the Sanhedrin knew of where Peter and John had been to get their message—they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. What a splendid testimony those words are to the result of the lessons which these disciples had had as they sat at the feet of their Master!.

"If they persecute me, they will also persecute you," Jesus had told his disciples in his last farewell talk. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. These things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you." Today we hear about the first one of the many persecutions which the apostles suffered as Jesus had forewarned them.

Why the Rulers Imprisoned Peter and John. It was no wonder that the

Jewish rulers were troubled because the disciples proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. If Jesus had indeed arisen, then was he the Messiah, and then were they guilty of putting to death their King. The people were believing the witness of the apostles, the membership of the new sect was growing. The healing of the lame man was a miracle such as Jesus himself had wrought, and it had convinced many that the apostles wielded the same power that was Jesus.' "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him," they had said after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Now after the apostles had raised up the lame man, if they are let alone, will not all men believe in them and in Jesus as the Christ?

It is Enough for the Disciple that he be as his Teacher. Some little time ago a writer reported an interview he had had with K'ang Yu Wei, the Chinese reformer, who had to flee for his life from Peking in 1898. Let me quote part of one paragraph: "I asked K'ang Yu Wei, who had studied the Gospels profoundly, what seemed to him the most striking quality in Jesus. He answered, somewhat to my surprise, that what appealed to him most in the personality of Jesus was his courage—the manliness which could so quietly and dauntlessly face the hatred of so many of his fellow-countrymen, the fierce enmity of the proud Pharisees, and, above all, the certainty of death, and of the outward failure of his mission; the courage which undertook a work so constructive, the valor which could make, and could ask from others, such large sacrifices."

And what of the men who followed him? Timid and shrinking at the outset, they became lionlike in their courage, and doglike in their devotion, so that whether it was Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, Stephen before his murderers, or Paul before Hebrew Prince or Roman Emperor, the one outstanding fact, that which cannot but impress the impartial observer, is the strong, stalwart manliness they displayed, an honor to their Master, and an example to the world. You greatly mistake, therefore, if you imagine that Christianity stifles manliness, that the practice of prayer and the exercise of faith make a man a mouse, or detract from the finest and most admirable qualities of our common manhood.—John Hedley.

The Source of the Apostles' Courage. Peter and John returned to their little company and reported to them what had happened. And they lifted up their voice to God with one accord. Dr. Jowett shows the inspiration and help received: his words I am obliged to condense.

They lifted up their eyes to the heavens and they said, "How great God is!" They turned their eyes upon the past and they said, "How good God is!" And then they brought Herod in and looked at him there beside God, and Caiaphas and John. What next? Then they prayed. For what did they pray? They prayed for pluck. "Grant unto thy servants that in all boldness they may speak Thy word"—a prayer for pluck, for moral valor.

Is anyone here thinking that to be quite irrelevant, impracticable, dreamily mystical, remote, to pray for pluck? Well, try it. Take your timidities, take your unwise and sometimes criminal reserves and reticences, take your fears, and I promise you that you will join that happy and glorious company of witnesses, one of whom spoke in these words in the olden days, "I called unto the Lord and he heard me, and he delivered me from all my fears." They prayed for pluck, and there was given to them the steadying, confirming sense of God's holy presence and the energizing assurance of triumph, and the mighty certainty that is born of splendid hope. They prayed for courage, as we must pray today.

And what was the outcome? "And when they had prayed they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." That is what happened. They received the gift of divine power, spiritual power. And then they set about the courageous prosecution of their mission. They preached the Word in despite of antagonism, in the face of threat, and multitudes were won unto the discipleship of the blessed Lord. A look up—how great God is! A look back—how gracious the Lord is! A look at the enemy—a prayer for courage—the power of the Holy Spirit.

He Who Fears God Need Not Fear Men. Chrysostom, the archbishop of Constantinople, was a fearless reformer. He called evils by their right names, and was as relentless in his denunciation of those high in authority as of those in lowly position. He aroused the hatred of the Empress, and she commanded an official to threaten him that unless he moderated his zeal she would have him removed from his office and cast into prison, or even put to death. "Of what use

will it be to say all that to a man who is afraid of nothing save of sin?" questioned the official.

When the charge was brought against Socrates of neglecting his country's gods and corrupting the youth of the land by his teaching, and he was condemned to death, that noble philosopher said, "O ye Athenians, I will obey God rather than you; and if you would dismiss me and spare my life, on condition that I would cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would rather die a thousand times than accept your proposal."

When Luther at Worms was commanded by the Emperor Charles V and the Pope to recant, he replied: "I can not recant. It is not wise, it is not safe, for a man to do anything against his conscience. Here I stand. I can not do otherwise. God help me!"

Said William H. Seward in the Senate Chamber when the anti-slavery agitation was at its height, "There is a higher law than human constitutions."

The Great Need of Today. There is great and peculiar need of this apostolic "boldness" today. The times imperatively demand the military attitude in the soul. The Christian character must be conspicuous for strength, intelligence, decisiveness, attack. Whatever may be allowed to lie in obscurity, or hidden away in secret and mystical depths, the masculinity of Christian discipleship must stand out in bold and flaming relief. I do not fear the serried hosts and hordes of organized deviltry if only the temper of the Church is steeled for the fray. There is nothing in the might and majesty of the foe to make us dismayed, but we do need to fear a soft and limp and flaccid Christianity. How do we stand in the matter? Can we say that the great characteristic of our modern discipleship is its boldness, and that by the very vim and pulse of our living we arrest the world in wonder? I must express my fear that we are creating vast numbers of pulpy Christians who are destitute of strong backbone.

"They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." That is imperfectly stated. It leaves out the essential secret. "They had been with Jesus?" Nay, *they were* with Jesus! "I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be shaken in the heart of the seas." "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in The Transfigured Church.

For Enlargement or Discussion. We have no cause to fear that we shall *suffer* for bearing our witness for Christ, but do we never fear *what others may say* about us should we do this? Such fear is usually as groundless as was that of Bishop Matthew Simpson when a young man. He felt that he ought to speak at prayer-meeting one Sunday evening in the absence of the minister, but he said to himself, "How can I? I shall make a fool of myself. What will my uncle say?" But that uncle whom he dreaded, came to him and said, "Don't you think you could speak to the people tonight? I think you can do good." When he told his mother that he had decided to become a preacher, he feared what she would say, but she smiled and said, "My son, I have been looking for this hour ever since you were born." See Two Kinds of Courage, Living Age, Sept. 19, 1914.

2. Has the Church today the courage of its convictions in its witnessing for Christ? See Chapter XV of The Transfigured Church, by Dr. Jowett; Chapter on The Literature of Courage in The Fascination of the Book, by Professor Work.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When was the Acts written? 2. What was Luke's purpose in writing this book? 3. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira? 4. What was the motive that prompted it? 5. Was Sapphira as guilty as Ananias? 6. Why does Peter say that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit? 7. What instances of deceit does Genesis record? 8. What does Lk. 12.1 say about hypocrisy? 9. Why is Ananias' name rather than Peter's (who denied his Lord) applied to liars? 10. What did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about hypocrites? (Mt. 6.2-4.) 11. How did Jesus regard sham of every sort? 12. Is sincerity a comparatively rare virtue? 13. Why does any one lie? 14. Is there such a thing as a "lie of necessity"? 15. Is a lie ever justifiable? 16. Which is worse, a lie found out, or one undiscovered? 17. Can business be conducted without lying? 18. Was Kant right in classifying truthfulness among the duties to self and placing falsehood on the same level with suicide? 19. Was Young right in declaring that the love of praise glows in every heart?

 Cont on 160B

No hope without sincerity.
He acted + preached than spoken

LESSON IV—JANUARY 25

PETER STANDS FOR TRUTH AND HONESTY

Golden Text

Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; But they that deal truly are his delight. Proverbs 12.22

LESSON Acts 5.1-11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Proverbs 6.16-19; 11.1; 12.22; Matthew 6.1-18; Galatians 6.7, 8; Ephesians 4.15, 26, 30; Revelation 22.15

ACTS 5.1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. 6 And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 But Peter *said* unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. 10 And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Desire — Deception

Disappointment — Death

I. PETER'S EXPOSURE AND DENUNCIATION OF ANANIAS' GUILT, verses 1-4. *But*, in contrast to Barnabas' true generosity, 4.36, 37, *a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price.* "Ananias" means "Jehovah is gracious," and "Sapphira' means "Beautiful"; "their names were favorable and beautiful," comments Bengel, "but their principles were bad." *His wife also being privy to it*—they had planned together the deceit of offering a part as though it were their all. *And laid it at the apostles' feet.* "So it happens that he rather honors the feet of the apostles than the eyes of Jesus"(Calvin).

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart? "The cause of the overt act is a heart *filled* with sin; for that is why Satan fills the heart"(Abbott). *To lie to the Holy Spirit.* A lie may be acted as well as spoken. In a town in India a British agent decided to shade the native shops by planting some peepul trees, but when the shopkeepers learned of his intention they declared they would move. The peepul tree is considered sacred by the Hindus. "We cannot tell untruths or swear falsely under a peepul tree," they said, and naïvely added, "and how can we carry on business otherwise?" When Peter asked Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" and when he asked Sapphira, "How is it that ye have agreed together to try the

Spirit of the Lord?" he impressed the truth that God's presence overshadowed them always, and they had not sinned against men but against God.

While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? These words of Peter showed that the selling of property was wholly voluntary, and that the sin of the couple was not in retaining a part of the purchase money, which they had a perfect right to do, but in pretending that the part they offered was the whole, in seeking to gain unmerited reputation for liberality. *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* See Ps. 51.4.

II. THE FATE OF ANANIAS, verses 5, 6. At these words Ananias *fell down and gave up the ghost.* Here let us recall the sensible words of Dr. Faunce that our mission is not to justify the ways of God to men, but to rectify the ways of men to God. Ananias' body was taken out and buried at once.

III. PETER'S EXPOSURE AND DENUNCIATION OF SAPPHIRA'S GUILT, verses 7-9. *About the space of three hours after, his wife, not knowing what was done, came in to* the assembly, which was still in session. *And Peter answered unto her:* perhaps he answered an inquiry of hers not recorded, or her salutation, but the Hebraistic use of this verb, as we saw last week, does not require a preceding question. *Tell me,* he questioned, *whether ye sold the land for so much,* meaning so much and no more. And she said, *Yea, for so much.*

How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? To put to the proof whether the Holy Spirit were present and could be deceived. *Behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.* "Peter speaks as a prophet, not as a judge; he does not give sentence, he foretells" (Abbott).

IV. THE FATE OF SAPPHIRA, verse 10. *And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost.* "In the market-place of the town of Devizes, in England, there is a tablet which records that near to the spot on which it is fixed a woman dropped down dead, having just uttered the words, 'If I have the half-crown, may God strike me dead!' and the coin was found firmly fixed in her hand. Now, there was nothing in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira which requires vindication more than there was in that. God's hand was in both alike, and that to the sincerely pious heart is enough" (William Taylor).

V. THE EFFECT OF THE INCIDENT UPON THE CHURCH, verse 11. *Great fear came upon the whole church.* This is the first time that the word *church* is used to designate the Christian community.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They carried him out and buried him, verse 6. Because the body begins to decay soon after death in the warm climate, and because of the Mosaic law concerning defilement arising from contact with a dead body (Num. 19.11), it has always been the common custom among the Jews in Palestine to bury the dead on the day of death. Ordinarily soon after death the body is washed, wrapped in spices and cloth, and wound round and round with bandages. Ananias probably was wrapped in his own outer garment, and carried on an open bier and placed in a niche in a cave, the customary place of burial.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How many followers had Jesus at his ascension? How many were there at the close of the Day of Pentecost? How many after Peter's sermon following the healing of the lame man? Which one of the commandments deals with falsehoods?

The Christian Brotherhood. The apostles had been guilty of "contempt of court." They had renounced their allegiance to the great Jewish tribunal, and theirs became an independent church, responsible only to their heavenly Leader. At first, they made no effort to form any ecclesiastical organization. They met in private houses, they used the Psalms for praise, they repeated the Lord's Prayer, and they met frequently, probably weekly, to partake of the Lord's Supper, which was often followed by a church supper, partly for its social fellowship, partly to provide food for those in need. The one condition of their fellowship was love and loyalty to the Master, and although consisting of some five thousand people, because they had this one mind in common, they

lived without faction and vainglory in an absolute, equal brotherhood. The rich shared their possessions with the poor, and no one lacked.

The scene of the lesson is in Jerusalem. It was probably at the regular meeting-place of the church that Ananias and Sapphira met their fate.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In all our teaching we must get at the spirit underlying actions, and give principles, rather than rules, for right conduct. The spirit of unity and generosity and brotherly kindness which prompted those who had possessions to sell them and give all the money for the poor is what you will commend in their action, and the spirit of insincerity and hypocrisy and desire for applause which animated Ananias and Sapphira is what you will condemn in their action—rather than their failure to give away all their money.

In the matter of truthfulness, it is in the intent to deceive that the wrong of an untrue statement or action lies. There are some children possessed of very active imaginations who imagine things which have no relation whatever to fact, and since what they imagine is for them the truth, they have no intention of deceiving when they give voice to their imaginings. One need not be disturbed by such "untruthfulness."

Teach pupils to love the truth! Teach them that truth lies at the foundation of all friendship and love, of family, social and business life, that it is the condition of all honorable working together of individuals or nations. Teach them that untruthfulness destroys self-respect, and sows evil everywhere. Help your pupils to hate a lie, to scorn a "white lie," to have a true sense of what is right in God's sight.

A newspaper correspondent, writing of a prominent member of Congress, gives him this high praise: "He radiates integrity." Help your pupils to attain such a character.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: TWO DECEIVERS AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There is a counterfeit olive-tree in Palestine. What is a counterfeit? The counterfeit olive-tree is called the wild olive, or the oleaster. It is just like a genuine olive-tree save in the important matter of fruit bearing. The oleaster bears no fruit. In the days when Peter and John were teaching and preaching in Jerusalem, there were both olive-trees and oleasters, one might say, in the community of Christians. Barnabas was a genuine fruit-bearer. What did he do? Who were oleasters?

Two Deceivers and what Became of Them. There are two ways of getting things—a right way and a wrong way. The right way is to pay their price in money or labor or sacrifice. The wrong way is to get them by lying or stealing, trickery or deception. Ananias and Sapphira took the latter way.

What did they want? They wanted a reputation for generosity. Others had sold all they had and given the money to the church. And people said, "How splendid!" "What noble people they are!" These two, they wanted to have such things said about them. Perhaps some of you want the same thing. Perhaps you covet the name of being splendid athletes, bright scholars. It is not the name for it, but the thing itself, that you should earnestly desire.

What did they do? The way to get what they wanted was to pay what the others had paid for it—their all. But that did not suit these two. They wanted to get it cheaply. So they sold a possession and after putting much of the money received for it in a safe hiding place, they took the rest to the apostle Peter and gave it to him as if it were the whole. They sought to get the coveted reputation by deception. That is a temptation which comes to many, and to which many give way. Even boys and girls will stoop to do it. "Is this your work, and did you do it all yourself?" a boy is asked. "Yes," he replies. "Splendid!" But some one else did most of it for him!

What did they get? It didn't work. Peter could see that there was something wrong, and at once charged Ananias with it. And the shock of discovery and exposure was so great that it killed him. His wife, knowing nothing of what had happened, told the same tale and met the same fate. Instead of fame, shame was their portion. Instead of life, death. That is what always happens.

Suppose you succeed in passing the work of some one else as your own. What will happen when examination day comes? Will not your teacher wonder at your poor work then, and guess what you have been doing? But suppose you succeed by deception, what will happen? The success will lead you to do it again, and you will keep on doing it, till all honor, conscience, sense of right, your very soul, is dead within you. You can't get the great things cheaply. You have to pay the price. You can't make a success of deception.

"Little Scotch Granite." Burt and John Lee were delighted when their little Scotch cousin came to live with them. On the first day that he went to school with them the teacher called the roll at the close, and the boys began to answer "Ten." When Willie understood that he was to say "Ten" if he had not whispered during the day, he replied, "I have whispered." "More than once?" asked the teacher. "Yes, sir," answered Willie. "As many as ten times?" "Yes, sir." "Then I will mark you zero," said the teacher slowly, "and that is a great disgrace."

"Why, I did not see you whisper once," said John, after school. "Well, I did," said Willie. "I saw others doing it, and so I asked to borrow a book, then I asked a boy for a slate-pencil, another for a knife, and I did several such things. I supposed it was allowed." "Oh, we all do it," said Burt, reddening. "There isn't any sense in the old rule, and nobody can keep it; nobody does." "I will, or else I will say I haven't," said Willie; "do you suppose I will tell ten lies all in one heap?" "Oh, we don't call them lies," muttered John. "There wouldn't be a credit mark for any of us at night if we were so strict!" "What of that, if you tell the truth," said Willie bravely.

After some weeks the boys answered "Nine" and "eight" oftener than many used to; and yet the schoolroom seemed to have grown quieter. Sometimes, when Willie Grant's mark was lower than usual, the teacher would smile peculiarly, but said no more of disgrace. Somehow it made the boys ashamed of themselves to see that this sturdy, blue-eyed Scotch boy would tell the truth. It was putting the clean cloth by the half-soiled one, you see; and they felt like cheats and story-tellers. They loved him, if they did nickname him "Scotch Granite," he was so firm about a promise.

At the end of the term Willie's name was very low on the credit list. But the very last thing that closing day was a speech by the teacher, who told of seeing a man muffled up in a cloak. He was passing the man without a look, when he was told that the man was General ———, the great hero. "The sign of his rank was hidden, but the hero was there," said the teacher. "And now, boys, you will see what I mean when I give a present to the most faithful boy in school, the one who really stands highest in deportment. Who shall have it?"

"Little Scotch Granite," shouted forty boys at once; for the boy whose name was so low on the credit list had made truth noble in their eyes.—White's School Management.

The First Law of the Boy Scouts. A scout's honor is to be trusted. If a scout were to break his honor by telling a lie, or by not carrying out an order exactly when trusted on his honor to do so, he may be directed to hand over his scout badge, and never to wear one again. He may also be directed to cease to be a scout.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Ephesians 4.25a.

"Right is right and wrong is wrong!
Draw a line between the two!
Make it straight and make it strong;
Hold it ever taut and true!"

I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an "honest man."—George Washington.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who were scattered abroad, verse 4? 2. Why were they driven from Jerusalem? (Acts 8.1-3.) 3. With which one of the Beatitudes could the persecuted disciples comfort themselves? (Mt. 5.10.) 4. Who was Philip? (Acts 6.1-6.) 5. Where was Samaria? 6. Why were Peter and John sent to Samaria? 7. What was wrong about Simon's offer? 8. After Peter told him of his wickedness, was Simon truly repentant? 9. Where had Jesus told his disciples they should be his witnesses? 10. Where may you witness for Jesus? 11. How?

Note-Book Work. The Lesson Title; the story; the Golden Text; two Sentence Sermons.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE FOLLY AND SINFULNESS OF LYING Or, SHARING WITH OTHERS

Additional Material: Exodus 20.16; Proverbs 6.16-19; 12.22; Ephesians 4.25; Revelation 22.15.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. When the eighty delegates to the Peace Conference in Constance, Germany, in the summer of 1914, were told that they must leave on Monday because after that the railroads would be handed over for the mobilization of troops, they found the situation a serious one. The banks were closed, and many of them had not sufficient money on hand to take them home. Then the secretary suggested that all should put their gold in a common lot, and divide it up among them all. The suggestion was instantly adopted. A hat was placed on the table, and each one emptied into it all the gold he had. Then, in the language of our lesson text, "distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." The treasurer purchased eighty tickets to London, and gave two dollars to each delegate for food on the way. Thus by having all things in common they were all enabled to reach home quickly. Of course a record was kept of the amount deposited by each delegate, and on arriving in London those who had received more than they gave made good the difference.

The experience reminded them all very forcibly of the time in the early church when all disciples had all things in common.

Sharing with Others. The early Christian community at Jerusalem fulfilled Christ's command to love one's neighbor as one's self. Though consisting at this time of five thousand people, they lived in perfect peace and unity; the rich shared their possessions with the poor, and no one lacked. Among the richer disciples who sold their lands or houses and gave all the money they received to the apostles to distribute to those who were in need, was Joseph, a Jew of the tribe of Levi and a native of the island of Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas, which means "Son of Exhortation," for he afterwards became very helpful in the work of the church, in exhorting and consoling the people.

Where They Had All Things Common. The immediate presence of death at the Front gives tone to every expression of life, and makes it the kindest place in the world. No one feels he can do too much for you, and there is nothing you would not do for another. Whether you are an officer or a private, you can get a lift on any road, in any vehicle that has an inch of room in it. How often have I seen a dozen tired Tommies clambering up the back of an empty motor-lorry which has stopped, or slowed down, to let them get in. It is one of the merriest sights of the war and redounds to the credit of human nature. Cigarets are passed round by those who have, to those who have not, with a generosity that reminds one of nothing so much as that of the early Christians who "had all things common; and sold them to all men, as every man had need." You need never go hungry while others have food. Officers are welcome at every mess they go near; and privates will get food in the servants' kitchen, or may go shares with the men in any billet. It may be a man's own fault that he took no food on the march, and his comrades may tell him so in plain, strong language; but they will compel him to share what they have just the same.

One wet night on the Somme I got lost in "Happy Valley" and could not find my regiment. Seeing a light in a tent, I made for it. It was a pioneers' tent, but they invited me to come in out of the storm and stay the night. They were at supper and had only a small supply of bully-beef, biscuits and strong tea; but they insisted on my sharing what they had. I was dripping with rain, and they gave me one of their blankets. One of them gave me a box to sleep on, while he shared his chum's. Some lost privates came in later wet to the skin; and the pioneers gave them all the eatables left over from supper, and shared out their blankets and clothes. It was pure Christianity—whatever creeds they may think they believe. And it is the glamour of the Front. England feels cold and dull after it. Kindness and comradeship pervade the air in France. You

feel that everyone is a friend and brother.—Condensed from The Soul of the Soldier, by Thomas Tiplady.

The Reason for the Lesson Given the Early Churches. God was with the Church. All the sacredness that had once belonged to the tabernacle and the temple was now transferred to them. They were a holy body. This is the lesson of this section, and this the church itself, as well as the Jewish mass around it, did not know until God's judgment gleamed among them. This ignorance was not justifiable, but inevitable. Men are slow to learn reverence in God's presence. Moses does not put off his shoes before the burning bush until commanded. If Nadab and Abihu can see no difference between the holy tabernacle and an Egyptian shrine, the stroke of sudden death must teach it. If a David will place God's ark on a cart, and not carry it on the shoulders of men as the law prescribed, one of his chief men must die. The judgment on Ananias and Sapphira was of the same character and for the same purpose. God would teach that nothing unhallowed can be admitted in the service of his house. And the Church was now his house.—J. M. Stifler.

Their Guilt Contrasted with Peter's. What is a lie? Webster defines it as a falsehood uttered or acted for the purpose of deception; an intentional violation of truth. Ananias did not utter a lie, but he acted one, he gave a part as though it were the whole. It was wilful deceit of which he was guilty. Sapphira said they had sold the land "for so much." They had sold it for so much—plus something more: she, too, was guilty of wilful deceit.

A lie is always a lie and always wrong, but some lies are baser than others. In what respects were their lies baser than those of Peter? Their motive was baser than Peter's. Peter's lie was prompted by the natural desire to shield himself; their lie was prompted by a love of praise—they wished undeservedly to gain the good opinion of others, to establish an unmerited reputation for generosity, benevolence, self-sacrifice. They were hypocrites, and the motive back of the hypocrisy was like that of the hypocrites whom Jesus condemned so scathingly. "Take heed that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them," said he; "When thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do." Peter yielded to a sudden temptation, and afterward repented bitterly. They lied deliberately; together they planned to lie; and had their plan succeeded, had their deceit not been found out, they would have congratulated themselves upon their successful deceit. Peter was good at heart: they were thoroughly base at heart.

Truth Means Straight. A boy when asked to tell what he thought truth meant, drew a straight line with a pencil and said, "That's what it means." Of all the definitions of truth, that is the simplest and in some ways the best.

Straight! Yes, that is what truth means. Honest speaking and honest doing suggest the straight-ahead line, in which there is no turning away from one side to the other, but a steady course toward one definite end.—Wellspring.

Good Counsel. It seems to me that the shortest way to check the darker forms of deceit is to set watch more scrupulous against those which have mingled, unregarded and unchastised, with the current of our life. Do not let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless and another as slight and another as unintended. Cast them all aside; they may be light and accidental, but they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, for all that; and it is better that our heart should be swept clean of them, without overcare as to which is largest or blackest. Speaking truth is like writing fair, and comes only by practice; it is less a matter of will than of habit, and I doubt if any occasion can be trivial which permits the practice and formation of such a habit.—Ruskin.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The only safety for a man who desires to appear good is to do good.—Lyman J. Gage.

You will never habitually speak the truth if you aim only to *speak* it; you must aim to *live* it.—David Gregg.

Falsehood is poison—dangerous when placed
In Truth to hide the bitter taste.—Youth's Companion.

The greatest homage you can pay to truth is to use it.—Emerson.

Deliver our Souls, O Jehovah, from lying lips,
And from a deceitful tongue.—Psalm.

A lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies.—Tennyson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.

1. How many chapters of the Acts tell about the work of Peter and John? 2. Whose "acts" occupy the greater part of this book? 3. In persecution of Christians what has always been the aim? 4. How was it proved futile in this first great persecution of the Jerusalem Christians? 5. Has it succeeded in its aim since? 6. Why? (See Gamaliel's explanation, Acts 5.38-39.) 7. After whose murder did this first persecution begin? 8. How did the Jews regard the Samaritans? 9. What does John 4.9 say about this prejudice? 10. What command of Jesus bade his disciples preach to the Samaritans? (Acts 1.8.) 11. Simon is a bad example of Philip's converts; who was the good example?

Note-Book Work. Before Church Members.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: MODERN FORMS OF HYPOCRISY Or, PETER'S REBUKE OF HYPOCRISY

Additional Material: Matthew 6.1-18; 23.1-36; Galatians 6.7, 8.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Every coin has its counterfeit. Every virtue has its imitation. Imitation of a virtue is the homage which a false person pays to that virtue. Ananias was a counterfeit coin. Barnabas was a genuine coin. What virtues did Barnabas possess? Well does Dr. John Watson affirm that the utter meanness of that hypocrisy which makes great professions in order to hide rooted selfishness has been etched with steel in the incident of Ananias and Sapphira.

Why Satan Filled Ananias' Heart to Lie. Satan was able to fill his heart only because he had to a considerable extent, at least, left it empty. Rose, writing of the locusts in Spain, proceeds: "Pointing to the cornfields, a few hundred yards off, I inquired why the locusts were not to be found there. His answer indicated the truth of the saying that the mother locust's instinct is so fine that she always plants her eggs in waste-ground, that they may be undisturbed and be hatched in peace." The devil seeks for waste ground in which to sow his destructive germs—idle hands, vacant imaginations open to loose suggestions, divided affections, unguarded hours. Here is the vantage ground which is readily seized. Fill brain, heart, and hands with pure thoughts, holy feelings, noble work.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

How Satan Filled Ananias' Heart to Lie. Here in the early Apostolic Church was a beautiful thing, the spirit of mutual sacrifice. "I shall work through that," said Satan, "and corrupt it." Ananias and Sapphira talked their "giving" over, and Satan was present. "It seems a lot to give up everything," said Ananias. "Couldn't we keep a bit to fall back upon?" ("They'll never know," whispered Satan.) "You know, Sapphira, we are getting older." ("And you can get your ends more cheaply," suggested Satan.) "Let us give part!" ("You can keep it quiet," insinuated Satan.) And so they agreed.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

False Fronts. Carpenters sometimes make use of a plan in building known as a false front. A store or other place of business so constructed appears from the street to be solidly built in front; but from the back it can at once be seen that the height in front is only an imitation. The building may be really only one or two stories high, but its front wall has been built higher to give the impression of an additional story. That is what carpenters call a false front.

That is what people too often do—put on a false front. When we try to appear something which we are not, or assume knowledge which we do not really possess, or when we purposely give wrong impressions, we are putting on a false front—we are making pretensions on the outside which a closer acquaintance shows we do not carry out. A building with a false front is a deception, and so are false-front people.—Wellspring.

The Colossal Hypocrisy of the Imperial German Government. Frederick the Great at one time was about to declare war and asked his secretary to write the proclamation. The secretary began, "Whereas in the Providence of God, etc., etc." "Stop that lying," thundered Frederick, "simply say, Frederick wants some more land."

There came a time when his successor, William Hohenzollern, wanted more land. He was intoxicated with ambition and aimed at nothing less than world supremacy. His entire reign was a preparation for this last war, which was to secure all this to him and his realm, but he did not, like Frederick the Great,

speak the truth about his ambition. The whole German campaign, before and during the war, was one of colossal lies. "The policy of using lies, as one uses guns, to serve chosen ends, has worked down from Wilhelmstrasse to the ranks."

"We have known from the beginning of the war that the truth was not in them," writes a former Berlin correspondent. "All along it has been burnt into us that the lie in all its multitudinous shapes and colors has been the weapon of power in the hands of our unscrupulous enemies, and that they have never failed to use it, not only when the truth did not answer, but when truth might have served a useful purpose of its own."

There were good reasons at the time for this "joke" in the Washington Evening Star:

"Why do you keep referring to 'von Ananias'? There is no such person mentioned in the Bible."

"I put the 'von' in myself. The name of the original mendacity expert should be Germanized as much as possible."

A Query.

"If this whole world followed you—
Followed to the letter—
Would it be a nobler world,
All deceit and falsehood hurled
From it altogether?"

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. *As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and distribution was made unto each.* After Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, he said to them: "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." He meant, not that they should go about washing one another's feet, but that they should be willing and ready to serve instead of being served. In the life of the apostolic church many events are recorded whose example for us lies in the spirit of the deed, rather than in the actual thing done. There is no reason for our imitating the example of those who sold all they possessed and gave the entire proceeds for the common use of all, but we should cultivate the spirit that prompted such deeds—the spirit of unity and generosity and brotherly kindness. For the relation of Christianity to communion, see Chapter X of Dr. van Dyke's Essay in Application.

2. *And kept back part of the price.* And I, too, can keep back part of the price. I can bow before the Lord, in the attitude of prayer, as though I were offering him my all, and it is only a seeming offering, for I am keeping back my mind and soul. In my speech with my fellow men I can keep back part of the truth. I can offer an apparent courtesy, which in reality is packed with bitterness. I can "smile and smile, and be a villain." It is holiness that the Lord seeks, allness, wholeness, everything stamped with his seal. He seeks the completeness of the offering, all our life and all our estate, so that all "that is within us" and all that is without us may praise and bless his name.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

3. *And laid it at the apostles' feet.* The love of praise. See Chapter XII of The Gift of Influence, by Hugh Black.

4. *How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart?* Do we need to be hypocrites today?

5. *Thou hast not lied unto me, but unto God.* Is a lie ever justifiable? See The Outlook, Aug. 1, 1914, p. 780.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many chapters of Acts tell about the work of Peter and John? 2. Whose "acts" occupy the greater part of the book? 3. What were the usual relations between Jews and Samaritans? (John 4.9; Lk. 9.52-55.) 4. How do 2 K. 17.24-41 and Ezra 4.1-6 explain this hatred? 5. Who was Philip? (Acts 6.5.) 6. What is he called in Acts 21.8? 7. What was the significance to the church of the preaching in Samaria? 8. What famous convert had Philip? (Acts 6.26-40.) 9. What work is your denomination doing through its missionary organizations? 10. What work is your church doing for missions? 11. What work are you doing for missions? 12. What is the chief value of money? 13. In what respects does Simon resemble Ananias? 14. Is a merchant or lawyer or physician who joins a church merely for the sake of the trade or the clients it will bring him, like Simon?

PETER AND JOHN IN SAMARIA

Golden Text

Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1.8

LESSON Acts 8.4-39 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-9

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 2 Kings 17.24-41; Ezra 4.1-24; Luke 10.33-35; John 4.1-42. Or, 1 Kings 21.1-24; John 12.1-6; Acts 1.18, 19.

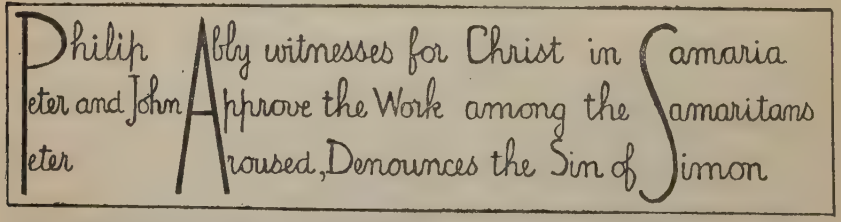
ACTS 8.4 They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. 5 And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. 6 And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. 7 For *from* many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was much joy in that city.

14 Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: 16 for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. 23 For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. 24 And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


Philip Ably witnesses for Christ in Samaria
Peter and John Approve the Work among the Samaritans
Peter Aroused, Denounces the Sin of Simon

I. PERSECUTED AT JERUSALEM, THE DISCIPLES BECOME PREACHERS ABROAD, verse 4. In the persecution that followed the martyrdom of Stephen, the disciples *were scattered abroad,* forced to flee from Jerusalem. See the Historical Background. The *apostles* do not seem to have aroused the wrath of the Pharisees against themselves as did the aggressive Grecian Jews in the Church, or perhaps they remained at their post in spite of persecution. The responsibility of witnessing for Christ does not rest on the leaders of the Church only, and the disciples, the rank and file, *went about preaching the word.* "God's loyal, loving law is: Move on! And if we will not move on, he in love must shove us on."

II. PHILIP WITNESSES IN SAMARIA, verses 5-8. And Philip, not the apostle but one of "the Seven," who is known as "Philip the Evangelist," (Acts 21.1-8) because of the success of his ministry (see Acts 6.1-6) *went down to the city of Samaria.* The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans (Jn. 4.9) but Jesus' last command bade them witness for him in Samaria (Acts 1.8). See Light from Oriental Life. To overcome the Jewish prejudice against the Samaritans, the followers of Jesus needed only to go to Samaria and preach to them. If you are prejudiced against any one, do him a good deed. *And* Philip *proclaimed unto* the Samaritans *the Christ.* The Samaritans, like the Jews, were looking for the Christ: Philip made known to them the fact that he had already come. *And there was much joy in that city.*

III. SIMON THE SORCERER, verses 9-13. Simon practised magic and the black art and convinced the people that he was a very great man; as Dr. Bartlett says, he occupied the place among the Samaritans which their religion assigned to the coming Messiah. Many legends have grown up about him, but the statement of Justin Martyn may deserve credence, that in Rome a certain number of followers worshiped him as God.

IV. PETER AND JOHN WITNESS IN SAMARIA, verses 14-17. *The apostles that were at Jerusalem,* were still rigid Jews who did not yet realize that the Gospel was freely given for all, and they *sent Peter and John* to inspect the work done by Philip and bring back a report as to its character. These two, *when they were come down, prayed for them; that they might receive the Holy Spirit.* Once when the people of one of the villages would not receive Jesus, John had angrily asked, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" and Jesus had rebuked him. Now John gladly called down upon them fire from heaven, not the destructive fire that consumes, but the flame of the Spirit that quickens. *For as yet it was fallen upon none of them. It* instead of *he,* for in Greek the word for *Spirit* is neuter. *Then laid they their hands on them.* "The apostles supposed that the Spirit would be given in answer to prayer and the laying on of their hands, and their expectation was justified"(Rackham). The imposition of hands was a natural gesture in imparting a blessing. It was also an ancient custom. In the Apostolic Church the custom was practised on various occasions.

V. SIMON'S SIN AND PETER'S DENUNCIATION, verses 18-24. *Now when Simon*—he is later called Simon Magus, Simon the Magician—*saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given.* There seem to have been visible phenomena. "Possibly, if the matter had been plainly put before them, all the members of the Apostolic Church would have acknowledged that the Holy Spirit was the source of faith, hope and love, as well as of tongues, and prophesyings, and miraculous healings. Only the latter phenomena appeared the more remarkable and the former appeared a matter of course; whence it resulted that the gift of the Holy Spirit came in ordinary dialect to mean, not the power to believe, hope and love, but the power to speak ecstatically, and prophesy enthusiastically, and to heal the sick by a word of prayer." (A. B. Bruce). *He offered them money, saying, Give me also this power.* He was trying to obtain the gift *of God with money,* verse 20. From this has arisen our word *Simony,* meaning the securing of ecclesiastical office by mercenary means, the trafficking in sacred things. *But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money.* This sounds like an imprecation, but in verse 22 Peter urges Simon to pray for forgiveness, thus showing that here he is only forcibly expressing his detestation of such a spirit as Simon's.

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. See Dt. 10.9; 12.12; Ps. 18.37. *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee.* Repentance is the first step that one must take whose heart is not right before God. "Peter neither forgives nor condemns; he stands midway between hope and fear, and keeping silence, leaves judgment to the Judge"(Plumptre). *For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.* "There is a double metaphor here. The ancients considered that the gall of noxious reptiles was the source of their venom, and Peter warns Simon that unless repentance comes he will become worse and worse until he becomes all venom; that is the first metaphor. The second represents Simon as a chain or band of iniquity, and perhaps means that not only will Simon become concentrated es-

sence of evil, but that he will become so habituated to being it, that he will not be able to break away from it" (Lindsay).

And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord. He thinks they can work greater sorceries than he himself (verses 10, 11), and therefore their prayers will be of greater avail. *That none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.* He fears punishment, but is not repentant.

VI. THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM, verse 25.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The apostles heard that Samaria had received the word of God, verse 14. Who were the Samaritans? After the Assyrians conquered Samaria the Israelite inhabitants were taken to Babylonia, and colonists were brought from Babylonia to occupy their place in Samaria. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as of pure heathen origin, descendants of those Babylonians, and in no way akin to the Jews, but the Samaritans claimed that not all the Jews had been driven from Samaria at the time of the Captivity, and through intermarriage there was in their veins an admixture of Jewish blood. The Samaritans read the same Scriptures as the Jews, but they had a rival temple of their own on Mount Gerizim. For the origin of the hatred between Jews and Samaritans see Ezra 4.3 and Nehemiah 2.20. A Jew of today, we are told by a native of Palestine, will not occupy a seat on which a Samaritan has just sat, will not drink out of a cup handled by the Samaritans, will not buy or sell anything to them, though he may employ them as menials.

Give me also this power, verse 19. The whole East at this time, we are told by the historian Suetonius, was flooded with Messianic expectations, and the expectations produced a harvest of false Christs. But apart from such special ideas, there was, in the decay and exhaustion of the old pagan religions, a greatly increased demand among men for religious teachers, to tell them something of the truth, to heal their diseases of spirit and mind as well as of body, to open up some channel of intercourse with the spiritual world, and, in a word, give them some knowledge of God. The class of "prophets," "seers" and "magi," who answered to this demand had always existed in the East, but now they were especially abundant. They appeared sometimes as exorcists, healers, wonder-workers; sometimes as astrologers or spiritualists. Some really tried to fill the place of philosophers and moral teachers; others claimed to be prophets and possess a divine inspiration. A few of the class may have been great men with more or less sincerity, like Apollonius or Tyana, whose biography was put forward in a later generation to compete with the Gospels. But the temptation to gain and cheat was too powerful, and the majority were nothing else than pretenders, quacks, and charlatans. Some were learned in astrology and the learning of the East, and the magi of Chaldea had an honorable reputation. But the boundaries between true and false science, as between religion and superstition, had not yet been clearly marked out, and so the word *magus* had already acquired its evil associations of magic and sorcery. As the counterfeit of the true, these false prophets were among the most dangerous enemies of Christianity; and the distinction between religion and spiritualism had to be drawn sharply once for all.—R. B. Rackham, in Commentary on the Acts.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"May be used with missionary application," is our Lesson Committee's comment. The text gives an excellent opportunity for this, and it should not be lost. Here we see the beginning of the world evangelization which Christ inaugurated. Here we have exemplified two of the basic principles of the Missionary Appeal—that Christianity was meant to be a world-religion, and that it was meant to be spread by individual evangelism. Missionary Collections and Missionary Spirit are not synonymous. To imbue your class with the missionary spirit, you must not let them become self-centered; you must give them a knowledge of mission work, and acquaintanceship with the lives of our great missionaries, a realization of the needs and of their own opportunities; and you must engage them in definite missionary activities. Take to heart Dr. Mott's ringing words: "No longer is my concern whether Africa and Asia will receive Christ, but whether Canada and the United States will love Christ as a result of not passing him on."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Before the Eighth Chapter of Acts, where does the record show the Christians were witnessing for Christ? Tell the story which Christ told about a Samaritan. Last year we saw John exhibit a most unpleasant spirit toward the Samaritans; what was the occasion, what did he say, and what did Jesus do? What were some of the things which three weeks ago we mentioned could not be bought with money?

Peter and John Imprisoned. Popular enthusiasm in Jerusalem grew rapidly. Faith in the apostles' powers became so great that the people even believed that Peter's shadow falling on the sick in the streets would heal them. Jews beyond Jerusalem heard the news, and brought the sick and demon-possessed to the city. The rulers were aroused, they were "filled with jealousy." They had earlier arrested and threatened Peter and John: now they determined to deal severely with them. The two were imprisoned, but the next morning the Sanhedrin learned they had escaped, although the prison was securely locked and the guards were at the door. The apostles were found preaching in the temple and were brought before the council. The high priest charged them with disobeying the command of the Sanhedrin not to preach, and with intent to make its members answerable for the death of Jesus. "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching!" he exclaimed in his wrath. What a testimony to the work of the apostles! The reason for their disobedience, Peter gave in one brief, eloquent sentence, "We must obey God rather than men." Then, strong in the consciousness of the presence of God, he calmly added that the apostles and the Holy Spirit were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus whom they, his enemies, had slain.

No wonder the authorities were angry enough to kill Peter and the rest. But one cool-headed man, a learned doctor of the law, named Gamaliel, had the prisoners removed and advised the Sanhedrin to let them go, for if they were imposters their work would be overthrown, but if they were divinely commissioned, then the authorities would be fighting against God. The Sanhedrin listened to Gamaliel. The apostles were freed after being beaten and again charged not to speak in the name of Jesus. They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for Jesus, and every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.

The First Christian Martyr. The caring for the poor became too great a burden for the apostles, and seven men "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" were chosen to have charge of this work. Two of the Seven were Stephen and Philip.

Stephen became well-known through his preaching and teaching. Grecian Jews from Italy and Africa and Asia Minor aroused the public against him and falsely accused him before the Sanhedrin. "Are those things so?" questioned the high priest. Stephen's answer was a bold and skilful arraignment of his accusers, and when his audience gnashed their teeth in their fury, he calmly looked upward and said, "Behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." He whom they crucified was exalted to power! Stopping their ears, the infuriated mob rushed upon him, dragged him without the city, and stoned him to death.

The Persecution that Followed. The record of the witnessing for Jesus in Jerusalem is now finished, and we enter upon the second stage in the expansion of the church. Henceforth, the Gospel was to be carried to Samaria and all Judea and then beyond, for the death of Stephen was but the beginning of a reign of terror which drove the disciples away from Jerusalem. A young Pharisee named Saul was foremost in this persecution; armed with a commission from the high priest, he visited every house where there were known to be followers of Jesus, and seizing both men and women thrust them into prison, there to be beaten and otherwise tortured if they refused to give up their allegiance to their Lord.

While the length of time covered by the events narrated in the first chapter of the Acts is not known, a period of at least six years is usually allowed for them, so it is now perhaps 30 A. D.

Palestine west of the Jordan consisted of three districts: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Judea and Samaria together formed a Roman province. Peter

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and John went north from Jerusalem in Judea into Samaria, where Philip was preaching.

The city of Samaria was the capital of the district having the same name. It was called Sebaste by Herod the Great.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: TAKING THE GOSPEL TO SAMARIA Or, PETER AND JOHN IN A STRANGE CITY

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What is the topic given our Junior Department for this lesson? Where was the city? Had Peter and John ever been in Samaria before? Who can tell what happened near the city of Sychar where there was a famous well? Jesus sat at this well, hot, tired and thirsty, and taught the woman of Samaria a beautiful lesson. Peter and John had gone on into the city and Jesus was alone when the woman came there to draw water. Whenever Jesus passed through Samaria, Peter and John had been with him. The country was familiar to them. Why do we speak of their now being in "a strange city"?

Peter and John in a Strange City. *An old place but new men.* Peter and John were greatly changed. When they were here before they despised the Samaritans. On one occasion John was so angry at them that he wanted to call down fire from heaven upon them. Why? It was told in one of our lessons last year, you remember. But Peter and John had no such feeling now. They looked upon the Samaritans with love and were willing to do anything to help them. If in fifty years time you came back to this city you might find it just the same, but you would not be the same. Like Peter and John, you would be changed for the better, I trust, for like them, you will have been companying with Jesus.

Old people but a new spirit. If the apostles had changed, so had the Samaritans. The men and women of Sychar had been kind to Jesus when he was there and had received him as the Messiah, the Christ, but all the Samaritans were not like them. Some had refused to let him enter their town, and would have nothing to do with him. Now they welcomed his messengers, listened to their talk about him, and accepted him as their Savior. They showed a wholly new spirit.

Old men but a new power. These apostles had a new gospel of love and sacrifice to preach, and a new power which by means of prayer and through the faith of the people could be imparted to others. And what a difference it made to those who received it! Those who believed could now live up to their faith. They had power to grow more like Christ.

An old evil and an old reply. When Simon the Sorcerer saw the power that was given to these people and its effects he wanted it. If he had it, he thought he could sell it and thus make money out of it. He saw a fortune in it, and he offered to buy it from the apostles. They told him that could not be done. What else did they tell him? In severe and indignant language they denounced the sin of his thought and request. People have such thoughts today. Some people think they can buy pardon for the dead and for themselves by giving money to the church. But it is impossible. Money can buy only material things, it can not buy spiritual things. You can't bribe God with dollars. Penitence, love, faith, prayer are the keys to his treasures.

Christ Needs your Help. I am in a little country church in Russia. The peasants come in one by one; they kneel before the ikons or pictures; they burn their candles, and bow until their heads touch the floor. Soon the service begins. All stand up, for there are no pews in the Russian churches. The choir of men's and boys' voices sounds out with a mighty strength and beauty, without organ or music.

And now the priest is bringing the Bible to the front of the chancel to read the lesson. It is so big that he can scarcely carry it! Surely he will let it fall if he tries to hold it while he reads the two long lessons!

But out from the congregation step two poorly clothed peasants, a man and a woman. They walk up to where the priest is standing, turn their backs directly to him, pushing their shoulders close together while they do so. Then the priest rests the big Bible on their shoulders and begins to read the lessons for the day. It is an impressive sight, this human Bible desk!

And it means something, too. By this piece of ritual the Russian church is

trying to teach a great lesson! The Bible is indeed carried on the shoulders of believers. If it makes progress in the world it must be because we put our shoulders under it. If we refuse to carry it, it can go nowhere.

Are your shoulders ready to bear the weight of his Word? Step forward! He needs you!—George Lawrence Parker, in The Congregationalist.

Sentence Sermons. Memory Verses: Matthew 28.18-20. The prospects (of missions) are as bright as the promises of God.—Adoniram Judson.

We cannot believe in Christ for ourselves without believing in him for the world.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of Jesus and the palsied man. (Mt. 9.1-8.) 2. Whose daughter did Jesus raise to life? (Mk. 5.35-43.) 3. What miracle was wrought through Peter at Joppa? 4. Through whose power did Peter do those great deeds? 5. Do you know any one who is confined to the bed or the home? 6. Have you done anything to help him? What could you do? 7. What good works is your Sunday-school doing? Your class?

Note-Book Work. The Lesson Title; a statement giving the reason for the visit of Peter and John to Samaria; two statements of what happened during their visit; the Golden Text; a lesson truth for you; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THREE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR TRIUMPHS Or, REBUKING DECEIT AND GREED

Additional Material: Acts 8.26-40.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. West of the Jordan River how many provinces are there in Palestine? Which is the central one? On your sketch map locate the capital of Judea. The capital of Samaria. Southeast of the city of Samaria is the modern Nablus, the site of ancient Shechem.

Here at Nablus there is today a little colony of the Samaritans, the only remnant of that ancient people, one hundred sixty-three in number. A Committee of the World's Sunday School Association is at all times looking after their interests: they are the present-day missionaries to the Samaritans.

Who was the first Christian missionary to those people? What led him to leave Jerusalem? How was he received in Samaria?

The First Foreign Missionaries and their Work. Philip, one of "the Seven," known later as Philip the Evangelist, probably little realized the greatness of the movement he was inaugurating when he "went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." He found the fields "white unto harvest"; the people accepted his good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and were baptized. There was great joy among them when many with unclean spirits, the palsied, and the lame, were healed. What report reached the apostles at Jerusalem? What did they do? What did Peter and John approve? Tell the incident in regard to Simon.

The Inevitableness of Foreign Missions. But there are some, strange to say, who do not believe in this enterprise. Here is a parable for them. Some years ago, an enthusiast went to a sturdy British member of Parliament to ask him to support a Daylight Savings Bill. The M. P. asked him to explain. "Well, you see," said the enthusiast, "if we get this bill through, we shall enjoy one hour more of sunshine in our gloomy climate every day. It's really a bill to let the sun shine on us for another hour every day." And the enthusiast detailed all the advantages—how much we should save on artificial light, the benefit to our eyesight and our general health—but the M. P. shook his head. "It is useless to talk to me," he said, "I admit all that you have advanced, but on principle I cannot support it." "On principle? What do you mean?" "Well, I don't believe in sunshine at all!" Not believe in sunshine! The canvasser thought the M. P. was mad. Object to the shining of the sun! Whether you like it or not, the sunshine is the source of all life for this earth. Whether you like it or not, the sun will still shine.

This parable seems to reach the height of absurdity; but let me tell another, equally absurd, that may be verified in many a church in this country. A collector went to a seatholder in a certain church, and asked for his support of the work of Foreign Missions. The collector pointed out what Christianity was doing in foreign lands. The seatholder shook his head. "That may all be true,"

he said, "but on principle I cannot support it." "On principle? What do you mean?" "Well, I don't believe in Foreign Missions at all." "Not believe in Foreign Missions at all! But you are a Christian?" "Yes, certainly." "You know that Jesus Christ is the light of the world?" "Yes." "You know that that light has shone in your heart? You know his glory and his grace?" "Yes" (this time hesitatingly). "Well, then, when you say that you object to Foreign Missions, you mean you object to Jesus Christ shining in the dark places of the earth, to give them the sunshine which has given you everything. It is too late to object. Whether you like it or not, the sun shines."—R. Newton Flew, in The Christian.

Are We Doing Our Part? The other day I chanced upon this striking statement: If there were in the world today but one Christian, and this one Christian labored for a year, and found another man and persuaded him to labor for a year, and these two labored for a year and found two other men, and so went on year after year, all who were found bringing others into the Kingdom, at the end of thirty-one years there would be two thousand million followers!

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The only reason Christianity does not possess the world is because Christ does not possess Christianity.

Love is the fulfilling of the law, and asks no aid from lucre.—Dr. Watkinson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What command of Jesus do we find fulfilled in the history of the Book of the Acts? 2. What great persecutor of the Christians do we hear about in the ninth chapter of Acts? 3. What effect must his conversion have had upon the troubles of the church? 4. Before this lesson, what have the followers of Christ been called? (Acts 1.15; 2.44; 5.14; 6:1; 9.2, 13.) 5. Compare Peter's words to Æneas with Christ's words to the palsied man, Mt. 9.6. 6. What was the "bed" which Peter bade Æneas "make"? 7. What was the greatest good deed recorded of Dorcas? 8. What has been its influence? 9. What good deeds equally great—or small—are within your power? 10. Why did the people at Joppa want Peter with them? 11. Who if in trouble would send for you?

Note-Book Work. In Samaria.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: COMMERCIALIZING RELIGION Or, PETER'S REBUKE OF GREED

Additional Material: Mt. 10.9, 10; Jn. 12.1-6; Acts 1.18, 19; 1 Cor. 9.6-15; 1 Tim. 6.3-10.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "A Jew was not easily driven from Jerusalem," writes Dr. W. L. Watkinson, "but the centrifugal force was supplied by the persecution, and the expatriated went about preaching the word. The persecuted Huguenots carried Protestant truth into remote places. The Puritans of the Mayflower fled from home persecution to lay the foundations of Christian empires in the New World. It is fascinating to follow the story of the distribution of plants by tides, winds, birds, and other agencies to remote regions, until they have spread and taken possession of vast areas; but the story of the geographical distribution of plants and animals is far less wonderful than the movements and agencies by which Christian truth attains universality."

"Providence, like Hebrew, needs to be read backwards." Reading backward the history of the Apostolic Church as we now can do, we see that the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of believers which immediately followed, were parts of God's plans for the more rapid expansion of the church. The Greek verb translated "scattered abroad" means literally *to be sown abroad as seed:* like seed the word was sown and brought forth a thousand fold, for wherever the disciples went they preached Jesus. The immediate result of the persecution at Jerusalem was the spread of Christianity to Samaria. Its ultimate result, the spread of Christianity to the uttermost part of the earth.

The Sin of Simon. Upton Sinclair, who is his own publisher, at this writing has just announced a new book having the title, "The Profits of Religion." Without any knowledge of the contents of the book, I find that his description of it—"A study of supernaturalism from a new point of view—as a source of income and a shield of privilege"—sounds very much like the point of view of Simon Magus.

The texts given as "Additional Material" tell us that Christ declared the laborer to be worthy of his food, that Paul asked, "What soldier ever serveth at

his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" and then affirmed that "the Lord ordained that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." All this is very different from the sin of simony. Dr. Joseph Parker, in his book about the Acts, explains: "There has grown up in some sections of the Christian Church a custom which is known as Simony. The meaning is that this or that particular spiritual function has been turned into a marketable commodity. The custom derived its name from the name of the Sorcerer, and from the circumstances recorded in this text. He who would buy a pulpit is guilty of what is called simony. But the simony of the Christian Church is not in the pulpit alone. We may buy or try to buy influence, status and authority in the Church by the use of money. Who is there that does not imagine that everything can be bought? Yet how little in reality can we buy with money!"

A deacon went to another deacon of his church in great anxiety. Their beloved pastor had been called to another church, and he greatly feared the pastor would accept the call. "What salary do they offer him?" questioned the second deacon. "Treble what we are paying him." "O, it is all right"; exclaimed the other in great relief, "if they have offered Dr. ——any earthly advantage, he will stay with us." That minister was not in the church for what he could get out of it.

A Father's Experience. A man gave a collector for the Red Cross so much money that the latter was astonished, for he knew the giver as a comparatively poor man. "Can you afford this?" he kindly questioned. "Yes, yes, God will then spare my only son who has gone over to France, I hope." Four weeks later came the news of his boy's death. When the two men next met, the collector assured the father of his sympathy, and then referred to the latter's gift to the Red Cross, saying he must think the gift given in vain. "For whom had I saved that money?" replied the sorely stricken man. "For him, who will never need it. The Red Cross will make good use of it. But if you think that I have been mistaken in God, you err. My great mistake was in thinking that I could buy God's help. God is no bargainer. We must make no conditions in our sacrifice. The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed is the name of the Lord."

'Tis only God May be Had for the Asking.

Earth gets its price for what earth gives us:
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us;
We bargain for the graves we lie in.
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold.
For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.
—James Russell Lowell, in The Vision of Sir Launfal.

For Enlargement. The belief in sorcery among heathen nations today. Recently in a town not far from a mission station in Africa, twenty wives of one man were buried alive in his grave because they were suspected of having caused his death by witchcraft.

2. The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing: it would cease to exist if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder.—Max Müller.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think about for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the character of the Book of Acts? 2. What fulfilment of the command of Jesus does it record? 3. In how many districts has the witnessing for Christ now been given? (Acts 9.31.) 4. In what sense is the word "saints" used in verse 32? 5. What similarities are there between Peter's raising of Dorcas and Christ's raising of the daughter of Jairus? 6. Between Peter's healing of Æneas and Christ's of the palsied man? 7. Why did Peter bid Æneas rise and make his bed? 8. What is the seaport of Jerusalem today? 9. What do you know about Joppa? 10. How is Christ healing men today? 11. Why does Luke chronicle the fact that Peter abode with a tanner?

PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA

Golden Text

The prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. James 5.15

LESSON Acts 9.32-43 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 61

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Luke 5.17-26; 8.40-56; Ruth 2.1-23; Psalm 41.1-3; Proverbs 31.20

ACTS 9.32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. 34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. 39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Peter and the Paralyzed Aeneas	Peter and the Philanthropic Dorcas

I. CHRIST'S POWER AT WORK THROUGH PETER AT LYDDA, verses 32-35. *And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts,* for, as Chrysostom says, like a commander of an army he went about inspecting the ranks, *he came down to the saints that dwelt at Lydda.* The Greek word translated *saints* means literally *the holy ones.* We apply the word to those who are distinguished by extraordinary piety, but it is used here by Luke as synonymous with the word *Christians.* The saint was one who was trying to obey the will of God and to work in his kingdom; every disciple was a saint in this sense of the word, and thus Paul uses it constantly.

Among these Christians was a palsied man named Æneas, and to him Peter said, *Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed.* Evidently Peter recalled Jesus' words to the palsied man, Mt. 9.6. *And straightway he arose.* "We have come to believe too many things which at first seemed beyond belief, to be hastily turned from anything which brings us reasonable credentials" (McKenzie). This miracle resulted in many converts being gained in Lydda and in Sharon.

II. CHRIST'S POWER AT WORK THROUGH PETER AT JOPPA,

verses 36-42. *Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha,* an Aramaic name meaning "Gazelle"; translated into Greek, the name became *Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.* Moffatt's rendering is, "A woman whose life was full of good actions and of charitable practices." Recall Benjamin Franklin's dictum: The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?

Now while Peter was at Lydda, Dorcas died, and they sent in haste to Peter, urging him to come to them at Joppa. Did they expect Peter to restore Dorcas to life, or did they only feel the need of his presence and sympathy? Peter obeyed the summons, and when he entered *the upper chamber* where Dorcas' body lay, *all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.* By *coats* the tunics, or undergarments, are meant; and by *garments,* the loose outer robes which were fastened by girdles. Margaret Bottome observes that "there are a good many women who, when they die, will not have much crying at their funerals, for all the garments they leave behind them were made for themselves."

"Peter remembered how our Lord had cleared a death-chamber of noisy, professional wailers (Mk. 5.35-43), and so he *put forth* the true mourners. He remembered the very words with which Jesus had raised Jairus' daughter; and again he pleased himself, in a naïve and innocent fashion, by copying their very sound, and for that purpose availed himself of the Jewish, rather than the Greek name of the dead woman. Thinking of *Talitha cumi,* he said to her, *Tabitha cumi*— the change of one letter, *Tabitha, arise"* (Alexander Maclaren). *And she opened her eyes,* and soon he was able to *present her alive* to her friends. As in the case of Æneas at Lydda, the result was that *many believed on the Lord.*

III. PETER SOJOURNS WITH SIMON THE TANNER, verse 43. There had been a time when Peter would have slept out of doors rather than enter a tanner's abode. His Jewish exclusiveness was being shaken.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Make thy bed, verse 34. Bedsteads like ours have never been in use in Palestine. In the better houses there is a raised platform at one end of the sleeping room and on this the bed is made, but in the poorer homes the bed is made on the floor of the one room. The bed consists of a mat, or rug, or sheep-skins sewed together, or a mattress made by stuffing a quilted coverlet with wool. On rising, the bed is made by rolling it up. In the Greek the word *bed* is not expressed, and the words στρῶσον σεαυτῷ, translated *make thy bed,* mean literally, *spread for thyself;* the palsied man is directed to do for himself what others have long had to do for him.

Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas, verse 36. Perhaps Tabitha was never called Dorcas, but it was not unusual for the Jews to have both a Hebrew (Aramaic) and a Greek name, especially in a seaport town like Joppa, where there were both Jews and Greeks.

When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber, verse 37. In our lesson about Ananias we learned that it was customary because of the warm climate of Palestine to bury the dead on the day of death. See page 69. Lydda was so near that there was evidently time for Peter to arrive before nightfall, and it was not uncommon to bury the dead at night if death occurred after sunset. Ordinarily the body is washed, wrapped in spices and cloth, and wound round and round with bandages. It was customary to have hired mourners, but in this case their place was taken by the widows whom Dorcas had aided. The upper chamber was the guest chamber, built on the roof of the house.

A tanner, verse 43. There was no calling so repugnant to a Jew as that of a tanner. To touch a dead animal made a Jew "unclean" according to their laws, and tanners were therefore obliged to have their dwellings apart from others on the edge of the town. "The world cannot get along without tanners," said the rabbis, "but woe unto him who is a tanner." A woman whose husband became a tanner after her marriage to him, could obtain a divorce. In India they have a saying that "A Brahman and an ox are nearer akin than a Brahman and a leather-worker."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What miracle have we studied which was wrought through Peter? To whom did Peter ascribe the power? Who had been appointed to have charge of the relief of the poor at Jerusalem? What earlier lesson showed there was great poverty in the Christian Church?

Reasons for the Cessation of Persecution. The events of our lesson occurred when the followers of Christ had peace throughout Palestine. The persecution that followed Stephen's death ceased for a time. Saul, the chief persecutor, had become himself a Christian. Probably there was also another reason for the cessation of hostilities. Between 37 and 41 A. D. Caligula (Caius Cæsar) was the Roman Emperor, and Josephus in his "Antiquities" has recorded the trouble which Caligula occasioned the Jews. They were so occupied with this, that they had no time to concern themselves with the growth of the apostolic church. Caligula ordered Petronius, the proconsul of Syria, to erect his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, and dedicate it as to a god. Petronius came to Ptolemais, and there "ten thousand of the Jews" came to beseech him not to carry out his purpose. Here, and again at Tiberias, where Petronius went with his followers, the Jews declared that they would die before they would see their laws transgressed, and their temple thus dishonored. Throwing themselves on the ground before him, they affirmed that they were ready to be slain, but they would never yield in the matter. The war which seemed imminent between the Jews and the Romans was averted by the opportune death of Caligula.

The Growth of the Church. The Church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, Acts 9.31. This is the only reference in Acts to the spread of the Christian faith in Galilee. Luke's object is to show how, by a series of developments, the small sect of Judaism became a world-wide Christian Church, and the preaching in Galilee was merely like that in Judea.

Not only did the followers of Jesus increase in numbers, but they grew in character, for they lived in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The care and supervision of the churches, scattered here and there during this period of rapid expansion, fell to the apostles, for the new Christian communities needed counsel and instruction.

Philip and the Ethiopian. Crowds in Samaria were listening gladly to Philip (recall our last lesson), when he was divinely directed to leave this profitable field and go toward the South, to a desolate place on the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Wondering much, no doubt, over the interruption to his prosperous mission in Samaria, yet convinced that this was God's leading, Philip obeyed. An Ethiopian, the treasurer of the queen, was returning in his chariot from a visit to Jerusalem where he had been to worship. Philip approached and heard the Ethiopian reading aloud a prophetic passage from the prophet Isaiah. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Philip questioned. "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" the Ethiopian asked in return, and besought Philip to join him. Philip did so, and beginning with that scripture he preached unto him Jesus. When they reached a place where there was water, the Ethiopian begged Philip to baptize him, and Philip consented. Then the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing and Philip went northward to Cæsarea, by way of the coast probably, and won many converts by his preaching in the cities through which he passed.

Peter's Journey to the Maritime Plain. As in Samaria, so in these half-pagan cities, Philip was bringing the gospel to those outside of Judaism, and therefore Peter came down to inspect his work. The stories of healing and of raising from the dead which constitute our lesson show how certain Peter had become of the power of God working through him.

The date of this journey is uncertain. It may have been 39 or 40 A. D., or even as early as 37 A. D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The two cities of Joppa and Lydda are on the Plain of Sharon, that part of the Maritime Plain lying between Carmel and Joppa. It was this district which Philip had traveled on his preaching tour from Azotus to Cæsarea.

Joppa was then, as now, the seaport of Jerusalem, thirty miles away, with which it is now connected by a railroad. The modern name of the city is *Jaffa.*

Joppa means Beautiful, and very attractive the city looks from the deck of an approaching steamer, its white, flat-roofed houses climbing the terraced side of the hill and embedded in orange and lemon and palm trees, and over all the clear azure sky for a canopy. Joppa was a very old city at the time Peter visited it. Under the name of Ja-pu it is listed at Karnak as one of the cities of Canaan conquered by the Pharaoh Thothmes III about 1600 B. C. It was to this place that Hiram king of Tyre sent cedars of Lebanon for Solomon's Temple; it was from here that Jonah set sail for Tarshish, instead of going to Nineveh. And it was here that Simon the Tanner and Dorcas lived.

Tabitha's Well, Joppa

At the inn where we stayed the rooms are named instead of numbered, and I was glad to be quartered in the room called Tabitha. The site of her house is covered by a Greek Church, and near by is a rock-cut tomb claimed to be hers. For a picture of the traditional house of Simon the Tanner, see the next lesson.

Lydda was "nigh unto Joppa," now eleven miles away on the railroad. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., it was famed as the place where the great Jewish rabbis expounded the law.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

What a large number of men and women there are in all our churches who do not count! They are respectable people, even good people, but they do not take an office, they do not teach a Sunday-school class, they do not help in any of the organizations or meetings or activities, they do not give themselves in any way to the work of the church. Where lies the fault? In part it may be traced to the Sunday-school teachers who did not teach them when young that they must be about their Father's business. In what definite Christian activities are you encouraging and leading your pupils?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: WHAT PETER DID AT LYDDA AND JOPPA

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The last time we saw Peter, John was with him. The two together did a splendid work in Samaria. Now for some reason the two friends have separated and Peter is alone. No doubt he missed John, but his work did not suffer. Today we have the story of what he did at a city on the coast and at another near by. What were the two cities?

What Peter Did at Lydda and Joppa. Peter made a discovery. We read that he went to the saints at Lydda, that is, he went to the Christians there. How came there to be Christians in that place? We have no account of any church being founded there. He went also to Joppa by the sea and found there another church which was taking special care of the widows. How did that come about? You must go back to the last verse of the eighth chapter to find the explanation. What do we read there? Philip had passed through all this region and of course he had preached wherever he went. The result was a church at Lydda and another at Joppa and others elsewhere. Peter on his journey discovered the good work that Philip had been doing. We are "passing through," too—passing through cities and crowds and homes. Will those who come after us find beautiful things which we have done for Christ? I hope so.

Peter was obedient. At Lydda, Peter found a poor Christian named Æneas who had been bedridden for eight years. He might have left the man in that sad condition. We are not told that any one asked him to do anything for the afflicted man, or that any one even thought he could do anything. Then while he was at Lydda messengers came to tell him that the best church worker in Joppa, a woman everybody loved, was dead. And he might have refused to go back with the messengers. Healing was one thing, raising the dead was another; why should he attempt the impossible? Yet in both cases Peter acted

at once. He healed Æneas and then set out to raise the dead woman to life. You see, when his Lord had first sent him out to work, he had told him to heal as well as preach, and Peter remembered it and obeyed. If a difficult task like that of raising the dead was his work, he must attempt it. Let us remember that we are not to make excuses and try to avoid doing things because we have never done them before, or because they seem impossible. Our Lord's commands are to be carried out at all costs and in the face of every obstacle.

Peter's imitation. What did Peter say to the palsied man? "Arise and make thy bed"—get up and do what others have been doing for you for eight years. Does that remind you of anybody? Of course you recall Christ's words to the sick man, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Then what did Peter do in Tabitha's case? He put everybody out of the room, prayed, and said, "Tabitha, arise." Of what does that remind you? Yes, of Christ and the ruler's little daughter. Christ put every one out of that room and said to the little maid, "Arise." Peter remembered, you see, and imitated his Lord, did his work as Christ did his. Jesus is an example in service. How shall you do your work for him? As he did his, in the same spirit of good-will to others, and relying upon him to help as did Peter in making your attempts effective.

What Good Deed Have You Done Today? Many years ago there lived a famous Roman Emperor called Titus. At the close of every day he had a habit of sitting down and thinking. And what do you think he thought about? How rich he was getting? No. Whether he was being praised by his people as much as he thought he ought to be praised? No. Whether he was handsome, or not quite so good-looking? No. This was his big thought. At the close of every day, all through his life, he thought, "What good have I done today?" If he couldn't remember any, he used to write in his diary, *"Perdidi diem"*—which means, "I have lost a day!" He felt that a day in which he had done no good was lost. So do I, and I'm sure you do.—Children's Chum-Chats.

Dorcas was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did—not which she dreamed of doing. Perhaps we imagine that we are full of good works because we think about them and plan to do them; the question is, do we do them?

How shall we do good deeds? John Wesley answers

Do all the good you can;
By all the means you can;
In all the ways you can;
In all the places you can;
At all the times you can;
To all the people you can;
As long as ever you can.

Every Little Helps.

There is no "little" and there is no "much,"
We weigh and measure and define in vain.
A look, a word, a light, responsive touch
Can be the ministers of joy or pain.
A man can die of hunger walled in gold,
A crumb may quicken hope to stronger breath.
And every day we give or we withhold
Some little thing which tells for life or death.

—Susan Coolidge.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Galatians 6.10.

"Here's the dearest little thought,
Say it o'er and o'er:
'I will be more kind today
Than any day before.'"

Our little acts of kindness may be unremembered by our friends, yet they are never forgotten by God.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Wherever a human being exists, there is an opportunity to do a kindness.—Seneca.

The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?—Benjamin Franklin.

The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.—Robert Burns.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Peter go to the housetop in Joppa? 2. What happened to him there? 3. Could he understand the meaning of the vision? 4. Who came to the gate while he was wondering about it? 5. What did the Spirit say to Peter? 6. Who went with Peter to Cæsarea? 7. What did Cornelius do when Peter entered his house? 8. How did Peter reply? 9. What did Cornelius tell him? 10. What great lesson did Peter learn? 11. What does this lesson teach you?

Note-Book Work. The Lesson Title; what Peter did at Lydda; a statement about Dorcas; what Peter did for Dorcas; a lesson truth for you; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE BEAUTY AND INFLUENCE OF AN UNSELFISH LIFE

Additional Material: Ruth 2.1-23; Psalm 41.1-3; Proverbs 31.20.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In India it is a common sight to see a feeble old man, his body emaciated and covered with ashes, his hair matted with grease, leaning on a trident, and carrying on one arm a leopard skin, and accompanied by his *"chela,"* or disciple, also begrimed with ashes, who carries a begging-bowl. They approach a group of men, and the old man sinks painfully to the ground and points a shaking finger at the passers-by. One of them drops a coin into the bowl and kneels reverently before the old man, who places his hand on his head, then raises it toward heaven and mumbles a prayer and once more lets it rest on the head of the man before him. The man then rises and goes on his way rejoicing, for he believes that good luck will follow him; has he not been blessed by a *Yogi,* or Hindu saint? What a contrast between such saints and such superstition and the saints at Lydda and Joppa who blessed others with their good works! The followers of Christ are called saints here, as earlier they were called brethren or believers, and later were called Christians. Paul begins his letter to the Romans by saying "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle.....to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints," and *saints* is a favorite name of his for all those who believed in Jesus Christ.

What work did Peter do among the saints at Lydda? The report of Peter's work at Lydda reached Joppa, a larger town a few miles away on the coast. What is the modern name of Joppa? What do you know about this city? The church at Joppa was in great sorrow. Why?

A Pioneer in Unselfish Work. The greater part of the people at Jerusalem who accepted the apostles' teachings and became disciples of Christ were very poor. Now and then a rich man like Barnabas sold his possessions and brought all the proceeds, and those a little better off than the poorest added what they could to the sum from which distribution was made to those in want. In the city of Joppa, the modern Jaffa, then as now the seaport for Jerusalem, the poverty was very great, and the fame of one woman there has sounded down the ages because of the way she did what she could to relieve the distress.

"Looking into the satchel of her possibilities she saw that she had not many talents there," writes W. Mackintosh Mackay. "She was not what the world would call a gifted woman. She could not 'prophesy' like the daughters of Philip. She could not work miracles like Peter. She had not the rare poetic soul of the author of 'the Magnificat.' No; but there was one gift lying there that she might use for the Master, she could sew. She had a skilful hand. And this she determined to use for God. So she resolved to strike out a new line for herself and become the needlewoman of Joppa. In the meeting, while the others were preaching and praying, Dorcas would be silent; but when the meeting was over you would have seen her in her little home, busy late and early, making there coats and garments by which she clothed the widows and orphans of Joppa. And thus, without knowing it, she became a kind of pioneer in Christian work, and made herself famous in the Church as the founder of 'Dorcas societies.'"

A Modern Dorcas. Four years ago Jennie Lanning was a little, unknown English girl. Then the war came. The war was a test that no one could escape—hero or coward, patriot or grafter. The war revealed the true selves of us all. It revealed the truth about the soul of Jennie Lanning. What could she

do—one single girl—in the face of such awful need and agony? Those who know what she did do cannot believe that there was ever a shadow of doubt or discouragement when she asked herself the tremendous question; for it is very clear that Jennie Lanning was of the invincible company whom no difficulties can daunt.

How she did it we over here do not know. But what she did was to get together the girls of London department stores until she had girls enough pledged to the work to care for the needy wives and children of the men of *one entire regiment.*

The "boys" knew about Jennie, of course—scores of wives had written them. They went into the trenches with her courage making them strong. They wanted to tell her something about it—the way they felt about her. So they got together and had a ring made for her from the metal of a German shell. It was to be carried to her by the commander of the regiment, who was going home on leave.

Jennie never knew about the ring. On the very night when the officer reached London there was a Zeppelin raid, and Jennie was killed among the children for whom she was caring.

The end? Oh, no; such lives never end! It may be that Jennie Lanning's greatest work has only begun.—Youth's Companion.

The Talent for Doing Good. What is an experienced fact in ordinary business or professional life—that accomplishment spurs to accomplishment—is especially true of the consciousness of being useful. There is a zest in doing good, a spice to the cup you share with another, which was never tasted in a drink of selfish pleasure, nor even in the intoxicating draught of secular triumph.

A benevolent gentleman gave a picnic excursion to nearly a thousand poor children. We asked him to pick out the happiest boy in the crowd. He glanced a moment at the rollicking mass of little manhood, then tapped his own bosom: "The happiest boy is in here; and happier than he ever was when a boy; for then he was only one boy, now he is hundreds."

The old English meaning of "Lord" suggests the highest aristocracy. It is compounded of *Hlaf,* loaf, and *weard,* guardian; the most lordly person is he who protects the living of others. "Lady" is only the Anglo-Saxon feminine for "Lord" and means the same thing, the woman who is most useful to others. What a shameful degeneracy where the title comes to mean fine clothes, equipage, and social superciliousness—the latter word meaning high-browism, in contrast with the spirit of helpfulness which expands the heart until it domes like the sky!

We frequently cite Professor Huxley for his scientific observations. Like all great men he saw more deeply than his specialty; that as the laws of the universe are based upon the underlying purpose of making a beneficent universe, so all study of science should have for its object the beneficence resulting from increased knowledge. Toward the close of his life he proved his title to "scientist" in the profoundest sense, for he confessed that beyond all honors that had come to him for successful research was the knowledge that he had helped some people to carry life's load with less strain and fret and care.

It was so with Michael Faraday. His friend John Tyndall said of him: "He prized the love and sympathy of men almost more than the renown which his science had brought him. He said, 'The sweetest reward of my work is the sympathy and good will which it has caused to flow in upon me from all parts of the world.'" Men loved him, not because he was great, but because they saw that all his greatness was consecrated to helpfulness. His discoveries flashed light both material and moral. He never allowed a discovery to be announced with any interpretation lessening faith in God; never let it fall as a cold ray which a pessimist could use to chill human aspiration and hope; but always saw to it that, like the sunshine, it was charged with warmth as well as with the light.

There is a beautiful legend of St. Francis d'Assisi. The blood which came from his way-wounded feet, as he went about doing good, transformed thorn bushes into flowering shrubs. The spots where he knelt to pray became gardens. The wells at which he quenched his thirst were ever afterward medicinal springs. The thorn bushes are the ills of society. Any man with the Christ-will can transform some of them. We all know where to find the branch that will sweeten the Marahs of life, if only we would spend time to look for it.

A lapidary, selecting a stone for cameo cutting, came upon an onyx whose pure white was flecked with iron rust. His assistant had thrown it aside as worthless. The quick inventiveness of the master saw in the imperfection the possibility of rarest beauty. In the white he carved a female form; in the belt of iron rust the shape of tiger's skin about her loins, showing the very hue of the stripes. Thus was made a famous Diana, Goddess of the Chase. Similar are the accomplishments of those who are gifted with that matchless "talent for doing good." The miseries of men give the philanthropist his opportunity. Under the touch of his loving genius rise stately hospitals, colleges, libraries. The impulse of kindness sends forth the disciples of the Red Cross, who make the bloody glooms of war to gleam with brightness which even the angels must applaud. The imperfections of society are the rusty onyx in which true statesmen work in making a better social and political manhood. The sins of the world drew down the love of Heaven, until the glory of the Son of God shone in the milder radiance of the Son of Man.—Condensed from Incentives for Life, by Dr. James M. Ludlow.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. "Write your name with love, mercy and kindness on the hearts of those about you, and you will never be forgotten."

"The evil that men do lives after them," and so does the good.

I love people who leave some traces of their journey behind them.—The Poet Gray.

"Two ends in Life two eager souls pursue;
One bent on Riches, one on Helpful Deed.
One's aim Dominion, one's the Good and True,
Achieving but to serve The Common Good."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the main outline of the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts? 2. Why was it remarkable that Peter stayed in the house of a tanner? 3. The Jews today live in every country; what makes the Russian Jew, German Jew, British Jew, American Jew, a Jew? 4. What was the vision that came to Peter on the housetop at Joppa? 5. What was Peter doing when the vision came to him? 6. What did Peter mean by unclean meat? 7. What was the meaning of the vision? 8. How did the meaning become apparent to Peter? 9. Where is Cæsarea? 10. What was the great lesson Peter learned? 11. What does Acts 17.26 say? 12. How was the news of the baptism of Cornelius received at Jerusalem? 13. What races have you heard spoken of in scorn? 14. Is there any excuse for such scorn?

Note-Book Work. At Lydda and Joppa.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL POWER Or, PETER'S MINISTRY OF COMFORT

Additional Material: Mark 9.28, 29; Luke 5.16, 17; 6.12, 19; Ephesians 3. 14-19; 1 Peter 3.8, 9.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The American Magazine published recently a serial story entitled "The Man Whom Nobody Knew." The hero, Dickey Morgan, undergoes a marvelous surgical operation after having had much of his face shot away in the trenches. The surgeons change it so that on his return home under an assumed name, he passes for another man. To prove that a change of this nature has actually been made, the magazine quotes Colonel Dercle, of the French Medical Mission to the United States, and also surgeons in the Great War: "In almost every instance of facial wounds we were able to make the injured man resemble the photograph we used as a model," one of them affirms. "One most interesting case I have had was a man whose jaw had been shot away practically from ear to ear. What we did was to lift a flap of skin from his shoulder and bind it to the fragment of bone left in his face. In three weeks his skin had grown over the shattered bone. Then we cut the skin loose from the shoulder, allowing the man to lift his head. To make the chin, we took a piece from his shin bone, shaped it to the proper form, and grafted this into position. In a few months he looked very much as he had before he was wounded. If he had wanted to have the lower part of his face changed in contour, we could have done it. We replace noses, cheek bones, lips, and so on."

Sounds miraculous, does it not? In the face of this, shall we hesitate to believe in the miracle of our lesson? As I am writing news has just come of a wireless message having been sent around the whole world. Direct communication between England and Australia, a distance of twelve thousand miles, has been established. Since the Hertzian waves move equally in all directions, this message moved also in the opposite direction to that in which it was aimed, and covered the other twelve thousand miles. It did more than that, it enveloped the entire globe in every direction. Think of saying, "Tabitha, arise," and knowing that the words will be heard with perfect clearness twelve thousand miles away! Such an effect is as incomprehensible as the effect of the words when first spoken by Peter at Joppa in the days of miracles.

The Secret of Peter's Power. "In a science laboratory was hung an immense horseshoe magnet. It was encircled by coils of wire, but it was inert and powerless. Suddenly the professor switched into the coils of wire a current of electricity, and at once a thrill of power seized the magnet. It snatched up four thousand pounds, and held the weight with an irresistible grasp. The disciples were like that live magnet: their power came from on high."

The Greatness of Dorcas. Imagine a political economist computing the value of such a life as that of Dorcas! He views men in masses; considers the economic well-being of society on a large scale; calculates what is productive of the greatest good for the greatest number. To him the few coats and garments made for a few poor people would be an item in the world's well-being scarcely worthy of being taken into the reckoning. To the astronomer, lifting his clear eye to the order of the stars, this planet is but a speck. To come down from the universe to the thought of a tiny earth is a fell descent; but to descend to the thought of a humble woman working at a few garments, were a fall indeed.

Human intellect, as it rises to the great, neglects the small. The Eternal mind condescends to the small; or rather, with It there is neither great nor small. It has divided the rings of the earthworm with as much microscopic care as the orbits in which the planets move: It has painted the minutest feather on the wing of the butterfly as carefully as it has hung the firmament with the silver splendor of the stars. Great and small are words which have only reference to us.

Judging the matter by the heart, ascending to the heart of God, there is another aspect of the subject: great belongs only to what is moral—infinitude and eternity are true of feelings rather than of magnitude, or space, or time. The mightiest distance that mind can conceive, calculable only by the arrow-flight of light, can yet be measured. But tell us, if you can, the measure of a single feeling. Find for us, if you can, the computation by which we may estimate a single spiritual affection. When the world has passed away, "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The true infinite, the real eternal, is love. When all that economist, historian, philosopher can calculate, is gone, the love of Dorcas will still be fresh, and living, in the eternity of the illimitable mind.—F. W. Robertson, in Footsteps of the Flock.

The Hand is God's Hand. In a story by Alexander Irvine a woman just bereaved of her son has sought consolation from Anna, who tells her to ask God to lay his hand on her tired head. "Wud he do it, Anna?" "Well, just ask 'un, and then wait and see!"

In faltering tones Eliza made her request and waited. As gently as falls an autumn leaf, Anna laid her hand on Eliza's head, held it there for a moment and removed it. "Oh, oh, oh, he's done it, Anna. He's done it. Glory be t' God, he's done it!"

"Th' han' was mine, Eliza, but it was God's, too. God takes a han' wherever he can find it and jist diz what he like wi' it. Sometimes he takes a Bishop's and lays it on a child's head in a benediction, then he takes the han' of a dochter t' relieve the pain, the han' of a mother t' guide her child, an' sometimes he takes the han' of an auld craither like me t' give a bit comfort to a neighbor. But they're all han's touch't be his Spirit, and his Spirit is everywhere lukin' fur han's to use."

Whom to Thank. At the feet of a medical missionary a grateful father and mother knelt to worship her as a god, for she had restored their child to health. Hastily the missionary cried out to them, "We are not gods. Worship the true God." "You must be a god," they said; "No one but a god could have saved our

beloved child from death." "Suppose," said the missionary, "that I wished to bestow a valuable gift upon you, and sent it by the hand of one of my coolies, whom would you thank, the coolie or myself?" "We should thank you, of course; the coolie is your servant." "And so I am God's coolie, by whose hand God has been pleased to send you this gift of healing; and it is to him you must bow and give thanks."

Co-Workers. I was talking with a friend the other night who had just come back from France. He had been at a great explosion, and he said that after that explosion he was talking with a friend who had picked up a lump of what they call "T and T," the most powerful explosive in the world, far more powerful than dynamite. As he lifted it up, he said to my friend, "There is enough there to blow up Saint Paul's Cathedral in London," and just then he threw it up in the air. Well, my friend took to his heels. "Oh, come back," he said, "don't get frightened. That is perfectly harmless until it is confined. Confine it into a space, put it into a shell, and the shell would blow up Saint Paul's. Leave it as it is, and it is perfectly harmless. You can play with it, a child can play with it; but whenever it is put within restriction then there is an explosion." Now Jesus Christ has a great program for this world. He cannot put that program through, except through your life, and the power of Christ upon the world becomes mighty when that power gets into your personality and is shot through your influence, your prayer, your surrender to God, and your contact with the world.—John Douglas Adam, in Christ in Relation to the Individual Life.

He that turneth from the road to rescue another,
Turneth toward his goal:
He shall arrive in due time by the footpath of mercy,
God will be his Guide.
He that careth for the sick and wounded,
Watcheth not alone:
There are three in the darkness together,
And the third is the Lord.
Blessed is the way of the helpers:
The companions of the Christ.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The Saints. One trouble with all the churches is that they have too many incurable saints in them—men and women who pray too much and do too little, who cannot forget their own selfish salvation enough to look after other people's without feeling their own spiritual pulse all the time they are doing it. Of late I've sometimes suspected that it is nearly as debilitating to stay in the church all the time as it would be to stay in a hospital all the time.—A Circuit Rider's Wife.

2. Jesus Christ healeth thee. How Christianity is promoting the health of the world.

3. A disciple called Dorcas, full of good works. Religion as an inspiration to service. The dignity and value that Christianity has given to lowly agencies.

4. Alms-deeds which she did. It is not the paying of somebody else to do something for one you know nothing about, the tossing thoughtlessly of a sum of money to somebody whom you consider a nuisance; not that, but personal attention, inquiry, and ministry, that is the need of the hour.—Dr. Charles Brown.

5. Delay not to come on unto us. When others are in trouble, do they send for you?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the main outline of the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts? 2. On what was the separateness of the Jews based? 3. How was it expressed? 4. What were the laws in Lev. 11? 5. In The Merchant of Venice, what does Shylock, the Jew, say to Bassanio, the Gentile, about eating with him? 6. How was Philip brought to the Ethiopian and how was the Ethiopian prepared for his coming? (Acts 8. 26-28.) 7. How was Ananias brought to Saul, and how was Saul prepared for his coming? (Acts 9.6, 11.) 8. How was Peter brought to Cornelius, and how was Cornelius prepared for his coming? 9. How was this a critical time in the history of the Church? 10. Is there any difference between Peter's message to the Gentiles and his messages to the Jews? 11. What verse is the heart of the message? (43.)

PETER AND CORNELIUS

Golden Text

The same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him. Romans 10.12

LESSON Acts 10.1 to 11.18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Acts 15.1-35; Galatians 2.1-21; John 4.1-42

ACTS 10.30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, 31 and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. 33 Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. 34 And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. 36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—37 that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 *even* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, 41 not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Cornelius the Centurion Becomes a Christian	Peter the Pharisaical Conquers Prejudice

I. THE VISION OF CORNELIUS, 10.1-8.
II. THE VISION OF PETER, 10.9-16.

III. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PUTTING THE LESSON OF THE VISION INTO PRACTICE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED, 10.17-29.

IV. CORNELIUS EXPLAINS WHY HE SENT FOR PETER, 10.30-33. *Cornelius* was *a centurion,* that is, an officer in command of a "century," which consisted strictly of one hundred men, but often of only fifty. He was not a Jew, but he was "a devout man, and one that feared God," verse 2, which means, not that he was a proselyte, for proselytes were circumcised and bound to keep the whole law, but that he belonged to "the outer ring" of God-fearing adherents to the Jewish faith. The "God-fearing" only accepted the creed of the One True God, made varying compliances with Jewish customs, and were admitted to a place in the Synagogues.

Four days ago Cornelius *was keeping the ninth hour of prayer* (three o'clock in the afternoon) in his house, he said, when *behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.* "God's angels (verse 3) wait for an open door. They find it when the soul becomes devout, the life charitable, and the spirit prayerful" (Samuel King). *Therefore* Cornelius was told, he said, to send for Peter. *Thou hast well done that thou art come,* said Cornelius; *now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.*

V. PETER'S ADDRESS, 10.34-43. The solemnity of the occasion and the weightiness of Peter's message is indicated by the words with which they are introduced—*And Peter opened his mouth and said.* In his first two statements lie the lesson of the vision and his mission: *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.* God does not judge persons according to birth or external conditions; the race or nationality of an individual does not affect the divine judgment; fear of God and right living in anyone secures his approval.

To those Gentiles Peter then preached the Christ. *He is Lord of all.* In the Greek the word *he* is emphatic: to show this, the words have been rendered, "He, yes he, is Lord of all," of Gentiles as well as of Jews. *Ye yourselves know* the story of what took place in the life of Jesus, and *we are witnesses of all things,* of his life and crucifixion and resurrection, *and he charged us to preach unto the people.* Peter ended his sermon by saying that *every one*—even Gentiles—*that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.*

VI. PETER'S HEARERS RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ARE BAPTIZED, 10.44-48. Peter's sermon was interrupted by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence. *And they of the circumcision,* Peter and the six other Jews who accompanied him, *were amazed, for they heard them speak with tongues,* as the Jews had spoken on the Day of Pentecost. *Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?* questioned Peter. *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*

VII. THE BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS DISCUSSED AND APPROVED AT JERUSALEM, 11.1-18.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Simon a tanner, verse 6. There exist few family names in the East; in order to distinguish from each other persons bearing the same appellation, various devices are employed, no one rule being always adhered to. A man's name is often coupled with his business or profession. Ekmekji Ahmed, for instance, is Ahmed the Baker. This was common in New Testament times. In Syria a married man is generally distinguished from another bearing the same name by adding that of his son, as Yoosooph Aboo Anton, Joseph the father of Anthony. —Van Lennep, in Travels in Asia Minor.

By the sea-side, verse 6. In Japan the lowest class is that of the *eta,* those engaged in the business of tanning hides, butchering animals, and executing criminals. In the past they have been regarded as outcasts, compelled to live by themselves, and to sound an alarm whenever obliged to enter the villages of other classes so that the people there might avoid contact with them. The feeling against them still persists in some localities.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

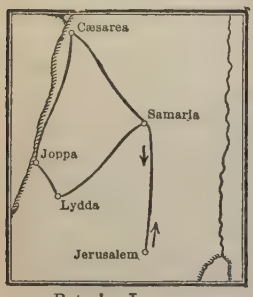
Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Where were the followers of Jesus bidden to carry the Gospel? Into what regions had it been carried up to this time? Who was the first convert outside of Judaism to be baptized? How had Peter's sympathy and interest in non-Jewish people already been shown? What statement in our last lesson shows that Peter had become liberal in his thinking?

Taking the Gospel to the Gentiles. Should a Gentile be baptized? Should a Gentile be admitted to all the privileges of the Jews? Should the Roman world have the gospel preached to it? These were critical questions which had to be settled by Peter and the other apostles. The gospel had been given to the hated Samaritans, but they had Jewish blood in their veins and they kept the commands of Moses. Philip had taught and baptized the Ethiopian, but Philip was not one of the apostles and his was only a special case.

The church at Jerusalem was still essentially Jewish, but a new era was dawning. A series of wonderful events was about to change the narrow, Jewish-Christian religion into the universal Christian religion. The way in which the truth was brought home to Peter, and through him to the others in Jerusalem, is the subject of our lesson.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For the location of *Joppa,* see the last lesson. Joppa was, next to Jerusalem, the most Jewish town in all Judea, the least controlled by Greek colonists. Pompey had decreed that it should be a free town, Cæsar had declared that it "should belong to the Jews, as it formerly did," and Augustus had given it to Herod the Great's Kingdom. "Joppa was therefore Jewish as no other town on the coast or Maritime Plain," says Dr. George Adam Smith. "Though Joppa was tributary to Herod, he never resided there, or tried to rebuild it, or plant heathen features upon it. Alone of the chief cities of the region it had no Greek or Latin name attached to it. In close commerce with Jerusalem, it was infected with the fanatic patriotism of the latter. To Jewish Joppa Jewish Peter came; and we can understand that, as he moved about its narrow lanes, leading to the sea, where his scrupulous countrymen were jostled by foreign sailors and foreign wares, he grew more concerned than ever about the ceremonial law."



Peter's Journeys

Cæsarea must not be confused with Cæsarea Philippi, near which Peter made his great confession that Jesus is the Christ. This Cæsarea was built by Herod the Great upon the Mediterranean shore, thirty miles north of Joppa. He constructed a fine artificial harbor by means of breakwaters (remains of which are still to be seen), and named the city Cæsarea Augusta in honor of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar. It was made the capital of the Roman province of Judea, and here the governor, or procurator, as he was called, resided and the Roman troops had their headquarters.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, "Behold, three men seek thee." While he was meditating about abstract truth, the concrete facts of life were presented to him: through these messengers he was given an immediate opportunity of putting into practice the lesson learned. Some one has said that Peter would have liked two tabernacles on the roof; instead, he had three native Christians to conduct him to the nearest mission outpost. Every vision is given that it may be put into practice.

So we must grasp the great truth that religion is not for self alone. The seeing of an abstract truth is only half: if the complementary half be not joined with it, it becomes even less than half. The true sequence is—ideal, impulse, action. Action is essential to render the lofty ideals an integral part of character. We grow wiser by receiving higher ideals, but unless we try to

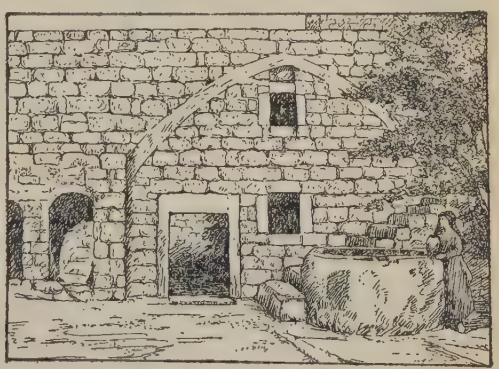
execute them we do not grow better. It is natural for a little child to attempt at once to put his plans into execution, his good impulses into action. The aim of all child-training should be to encourage this natural tendency. To hold forth lofty visions of the good and true to children of larger growth, is easy; to arouse their good impulses is comparatively easy; to lead those impulses to their fruition in action requires much thought and skill on the leader's part. Be on the lookout, point out opportunities for putting visions into practice, and teach your pupils to recognize them when they come.

Another thought. The vision was repeated over and over again. Some pupils can stand a great deal of repetition, especially pupils like Simon Peter.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: PETER WINS A ROMAN CAPTAIN

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In the times which we are studying, a Jew obeyed certain laws which other people did not. The people who did not keep those laws were Gentiles. The Jew was very particular about the kind of food he ate, and how it was prepared. He would never touch bacon or ham or any part of the flesh of a pig. He would not go into a Gentile's house nor eat with him. The Romans called the Jews "Basket carriers," because when on a journey they carried their food in a basket, or wallet, strung from their shoulders, that they might not be compelled by chance to eat the forbidden, or "unclean," food of a Gentile. When Jesus told Peter and the rest to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, they thought he meant to bring the good news to all the Jews throughout the world; they did not dream that he meant to bring it to the Gentiles as well. Today we learn how Peter found out what his Master meant.

Where did we leave Simon Peter last week? At the house of Simon the Tanner. Two Simons in the same house, one a great man in the Jewish church, and the other a humble follower of the most despised class! The house now called that of Simon the Tanner at Joppa, is probably very much like the original house. Here is the picture of it. Notice the large vat in the courtyard, such as a tanner would need. The stairs lead to the roof where there is a fine view of the sea, just such a view as Peter had, and there he could also enjoy a cool breeze.



Traditional House of Simon the Tanner

Peter was very Exclusive. What do I mean by this? "I have known boys and girls in the Sunday-school who were very exclusive," writes Grace Winter. "They have a teacher of whom they are very fond, and they have a nice class of a certain number who are all friends together. When the superintendent puts some scholars from a lower class into this other class which is so select, the boys or girls of this class grumble, and say: 'We don't want strangers in our class! We would rather keep it as it was, and we want our teacher to ourselves.' Have you ever known a class like this?"

Well, the Jews have always felt like that. They had their own laws, their own religion, and they did not want to share their religion with anybody else. Exclusive Peter lay sleeping on the roof of Simon's house during the heat of the day, and God sent him a vision. What was it?

While Peter was thinking about the vision and pondering what it meant, three men came and knocked at the entrance. They were dusty and tired, as if they had come a long distance. They asked for Peter. One of them was a captain. What was his name? Cornelius was a man of good position and used

to authority. He was already almost a Christian, for by prayer and works of faith he had been made ready for Peter's message. Cornelius, too, had had a vision: what was it?

And Peter was ready for Cornelius. He had had his vision which rebuked his Jewish pride and prejudices and narrow views, and had made him ready for such a task as awaited him at the home of Cornelius. Who will tell the story of what Peter did?

A Centurion

Cornelius found Christ, and so did the friends and neighbors whom he had invited to hear Peter. And Peter gained something out of that visit, too. He gained a new view, a broader outlook, a new conception of the gospel of Christ. He saw better what that vision on the housetop meant. "Of a truth," he said—what are the rest of the words? That God is the Father of all men, whether Jew or Gentile, black or white or yellow or brown, was the lesson Peter learned. Peter was not the only one who found that in helping another he helped himself; one never gives light to another without getting more light for self.

So this is the way that the story of Jesus began to be carried to all parts of the world. The eunuch whom Philip taught carried it to Africa, Cornelius whom Peter taught carried it to Italy, and groups of Christ's followers were soon to be found in far distant places.

A Lesson from Theodore Roosevelt. When Mr. Roosevelt was President of the United States he sent his children to the public schools instead of giving them private tutors. One day a visitor said to Archie: "Do you like the public school? Don't you find that many of the boys there are rough and common?" "My father says," Archie replied with vigor, "that there are tall boys and short boys, and good boys and bad boys, and those are the only kinds of boys there are."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Acts 10.34, 35.

Christ wishes us to rise above all the divisions of color, race, creed and class, and to be kindly to our kind.—James Wells.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About. 1. Why did Herod arrest Peter? 2. During what feast? 3. How was Peter guarded in prison? 4. What was Peter doing on that last night? 5. Could you have slept if you had been in Peter's place? 6. If Peter had been anxious about himself, could he have slept? 7. Why was he not anxious? 8. What were other Christians doing that night? 9. How was Peter freed? 10. Who was Rhoda, and what did she do? 11. Why did she do it? 12. Where did Peter go on escaping from prison?

Note-Book Work. The Lesson Title: a statement of the way in which Jews regarded Samaritans; the lesson Peter learned in a vision; how Peter was led to visit Cornelius; what he did for Cornelius; a lesson truth for you; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE OVERCOMING OF PREJUDICE

Additional Material: Romans 2.1; 12.10, 16; Philemon.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Where did we leave Peter last week? What was there strange about his lodging with a tanner? "It is impossible for the world to do without tanners," said an ancient rabbi, "but woe unto that man who is a tanner!" A tanner had to handle the skins of dead animals, and therefore he was regarded by Jews as unclean, and was forced to

live outside the city. It is difficult for us to realize the abhorrence with which the strict Jew regarded the tanner, and Peter was a strict Jew. And yet at Joppa he actually deigned to take his abode with a member of that despised class! As Dr. Joseph Parker puts it, this made a breach in the wall, a stone wall, iron-bound, buttressed with the traditions of generations; a breach in the wall that will widen till the whole falls, and man will everywhere hail man as brother!

How the Breach in the Wall Widened. To Cornelius, a centurion in command of a Roman band at Cæsarea, an angel came in a vision. The angel told him that his prayers had been heard by God, and bade him send to Joppa for Peter, who was staying with Simon a tanner by the seaside. Cornelius was a devout man who feared God, and gave much alms to the Jews, but he was a Gentile, and Jews did not enter the homes of Gentiles. So great, however, was his faith, that he obeyed the command, and sent two of his household servants and one of his soldiers to Joppa, after explaining to them the reason for their errand.

The next day at the time when these three men were nearing Joppa, Peter went upon the house-top to pray. He became hungry, and while food was being prepared he fell into a trance. He saw a receptacle, resembling a sheet upheld at the four corners by an unseen Power, let down before him, and in it all kinds of four-footed beasts and birds and creeping things, and he heard a voice bidding him kill and eat. "Not so, Lord," he answered in horror at the thought, "I have never eaten anything that is unclean." "What God hath cleansed make not thou common," came the answer. Three times this sheet-like receptacle with its contents was let down and then taken up. All had come from God, and the truth of the vision was clear, that what God had made and given was good in his sight.

While Peter was pondering in his mind the full meaning of the vision, the arrival of the messengers gave him its application. They had found Simon's house and were asking at the gate for Peter, when the Spirit bade Peter go down and go with them as they wished, for they had been divinely sent. Peter called them in and lodged them over night, putting at once into practice his understanding of the vision.

What did they do the next day? What happened at the home of Cornelius? How did Peter defend his course afterward at Jerusalem?

War is a Great Leveller. Perhaps you recall the story which went the rounds of our papers of the mother who said to her son, who had recently entered the army as a private: "Clarence, Mary's got some man in the kitchen. She knows perfectly well that I don't allow followers. I wish you'd go and tell the man to leave the house at once." Clarence dutifully departed to the kitchen, but returned hastily. "Sorry, mother," he said, "but I can't turn him out." "Can't turn him out? Why on earth not?" "He's my sergeant!"

In the army men are just soldiers. There is no such thing as a common man. A chauffeur may be a rich man's superior officer, a clerk may outrank the head of the firm, a son may give orders to his father. Social distinctions are obliterated. "The wealthy youth, who has never known an hour of self-forgetful devotion to other people and who has looked askance at those in different social station, finds himself messing and bunking with one who is the product of the slums of his own city, and he very soon discovers that they have more in common than they have apart. A university graduate makes friends with an illiterate mountaineer and learns from him more of the real significance of life than he learned out of books."

In the camp our men learned to know one another quickly and well, and they learned to look up to one another. Merit, not money, were the things that counted; not personal gain but service rendered was the standard of man's value. This is as it should be, if the spirit of democracy (which is the spirit of Christ) is to work in our own land and throughout the world. Since the war was won the civilian has had much to learn from the returned soldier concerning the true spirit of democracy.

Our Resolve. I will put away all prejudice against others. I will not despise others because they do not belong to my race, nor because they do not believe or think as I do. I will try to see each one in the light of the Christ who died for him.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. To render a service to anyone is the highest remedy for prejudice against him.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Rank is only valued by the wise when it offers opportunity for greater usefulness.—Donald Hankey.

Have your visions of God, but descend from the housetop to answer the men who knock at your door.—F. B. Meyer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What lessons do we learn from the Book of Acts? 2. Why did Herod kill James? 3. Why did he wish to kill Peter? 4. Why did Herod wait till the end of the Passover? 5. What do you think were Peter's feelings during his imprisonment? 6. What do you think were the feelings of his friends? 7. What weapons had his friends? 8. What weapons had his enemies? 9. What part do you think the disciples' prayers had in Peter's deliverance? 10. What put an end to Herod's persecutions? (Acts 12.20-23.) 11. For what is it right to pray? 12. In what spirit should one pray?

Note-Book Work. In Cæsarea.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: PETER'S ENLARGED VISION Or, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS

Additional Material: Acts 15.1-11.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In Jewish quarters upon door or window of a restaurant may be seen the word *Kosher* in English or Hebrew letters. It means that all the food served there has been prepared according to the strict requirements of the ancient Jewish laws.

How difficult it is for a Jew who no longer believes it necessary to eat only meat thus prepared, or to abstain from the flesh of the pig, is vividly portrayed by Mary Antin, in The Promised Land. In describing a dinner among Gentiles, she writes:

"All went well until a platter was passed with a kind of meat that was strange to me. Some mischievous instinct told me that it was ham—forbidden food; and I, the liberal, the free, was afraid to touch it! I had a terrible moment of surprise, mortification, self-contempt; but I helped myself to a slice of ham, nevertheless, and hung my head over my plate to hide my confusion. I was furious with myself for my weakness. I to be afraid of a pink piece of pig's flesh. And I began to reduce my ham to invisible atoms, determined to eat more of it than anybody at the table.

"Alas! I learned that to eat in defence of principles was not so easy as to talk. I ate, but only a newly abnegated Jew can understand with what squirming, what protesting of the inner man, what exquisite abhorrence of myself. That Spartan boy who allowed the stolen fox hidden in his bosom to consume his vitals rather than to be detected in the theft showed no such miracle of self-control as did I, sitting there at my friend's tea-table, eating unjewish meat."

It was equally difficult for Peter as "a newly abnegated Jew" to practice his belief that not only all foods were alike "clean" and wholesome, but that all peoples, Gentiles and Jews, were alike in God's sight and therefore in his own. He learned that lesson at Joppa and Cæsarea.

When the Death of Race Prejudice Began. Charles Dudley Warner declared that of all places on earth save one, Cæsarea is the most worthy of pilgrimage for all lovers of liberty, because there a follower of Christ uttered the words, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Dr. Lynn H. Hough, writing in The Christian Advocate, admirably traces the significance of this event at Cæsarea in the following words:

"The doctrine of the (chosen people) came to involve the doctrine of the people who were not chosen. The Jew began by rejoicing in his nearness to God. He ended by rejoicing that other people could not get so near.

"Peter continued to be a Jew after the day of Pentecost. The Jewish scales did not fall from his eyes, but a new force was working in his life. We know that something has happened when we find him lodging in the house of Simon a tanner. His fear of ceremonial uncleanness has begun to decrease.

"Then comes the vision of the descending sheet. Regardless of national views of ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, Peter is commanded to kill and

eat. Right royally the divine voice cries, 'What God hath cleansed make not thou common.' And at last Peter sees the full significance of the experience as the invitation from Cornelius reaches him. He breaks the chains of Jewish exclusiveness. He preaches in the house of Cornelius to the foreign group, and lo! the pentecostal experience comes with its shining glory to this non-Jewish congregation, authenticating Peter's word that God is no respecter of persons. In this hour Christianity ceases to be a Jewish sect and girds itself for its world-winning task."

The Same Lord is Lord of All. "Joan, you surely do not mean the common people!"

"Yes, common people. We are now only common people ourselves."

"I hate everything common!"

"The common earth and common air—and, I suppose, even common prayer?"

"You know what I mean, I will not sink to associate with common people."

"Sibyl, you remind me of the apostle Peter when the sheet was let down out of heaven. Sibyl, we are all common people, children of first common parents, of the same common flesh and blood, and partakers of a common Redemption."—Baring-Gould, in The Frobishers, quoted in the Sunday-School Chronicle.

"Young Black Joe." During the Great War, Irving S. Cobb wrote an article for the Saturday Evening Post, entitled "Young Black Joe." He had seen the Negro troops in France and expressed his belief thus: "I am of the opinion personally—and I make the assertion with all the better grace, I think, seeing that I am a Southerner, with all the Southerner's inherited and acquired prejudices touching on the race question—that as a result of what our black soldiers are going to do in this war, a word that has been uttered billions of times in our country, sometimes in derision, sometimes in hate, sometimes in all kindliness—but which, I am sure, never fell on black ears but it left behind the sting for the heart—is going to have a new meaning for all of us, South and North, too, and that hereafter 'Nigger' will merely be another way of spelling the word 'American.'"

An editor of a Southern paper, himself of African descent, in quoting Mr. Cobb, commented: "Is not Mr. Cobb speaking for a great host of Americans, mostly Southerners, who have seen all too well the pathos of 'Old Black Joe'? But may they see in the new Negro not 'Young Black Joe'; but young Joseph, educated, alert, aggressive, ambitious, hopeful, but at the same time loyal, true, faithful and sober, aspiring to be an American among Americans and to lend himself in every way to make this the greatest nation on earth."

"Don't say Wop!" exclaimed a soldier whose ancestors had come early to America.

"No! Wop don't go any more!" agreed an Irish-American. "That's looking down on them. We're looking up to them these days."

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Verse 19. See the first sermon in Phillips Brooks' book, Visions and Tasks.

2. Verse 33. This was a message from the pew to the pulpit. It must have been an inspiration to Peter, and it certainly would be if spoken by a congregation to a preacher today.

3. Christianity gets its supreme test in racial animosities and hatreds. "Strangely enough, the problem of the Jew today is not his prejudice against the rest of the world. It is the rest of the world's prejudice against him. The bigotry of men who called themselves Christians in dealing with Jews is one of the sad, dark pages of the human story. Many Christians today need to see the vision of the descending sheet and to give to modern Jews the benefit of Peter's great announcement of democracy, 'God is no respecter of persons.'"

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are the lessons of the Book of Acts for today? 2. Which Herod was this who killed James and imprisoned Peter, and what do we know about him? 3. What were Herod's motives in killing James and planning the death of Peter? 4. What words of Jesus to James were now fulfilled? (Mt. 20.23.) 5. Why did James lose his life, if the Golden Text is true? 6. What do we think was Peter's state of mind during his imprisonment? 7. What part did the prayers of Peter's friends have in his deliverance? 8. What shows that the disciples really had not been expecting their prayers to be answered? 9. What does Jas. 5.16 say about prayer for others? 10. Is prayer a power? 11. Does prayer always avail? 12. Why? 13. Are we using the power of prayer?

Library of

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Golden Text

The angel of Jehovah encampeth
round about them that fear him,
And delivereth them. Psalm 34.7

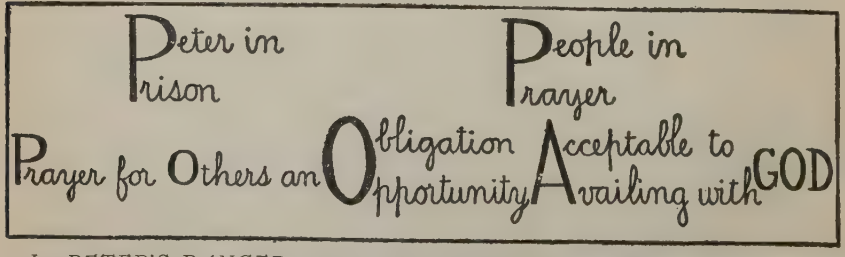
LESSON Acts 12.1-19 DEVOTIONAL READING, Psalm 34.1-8

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 2 Kings 6.8-17; Luke 22.39-46; Acts 16.25, 26; Philemon 4.6, 7; Hebrews 1.14; James 5.16-18

ACTS 12.5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. 10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had considered *the thing,* he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gate a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. PETER'S DANGER, verses 1-4. *About that time,* when relief was sent to the Church at Jerusalem, Acts 11.29, 30, *Herod the king put forth his hand to afflict certain of the church,* to persecute the foremost followers of Christ. This was Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, and the time was the Passover of 44 A. D. "King Herod Agrippa was as jealous of the preaching of the Kingdom of the Messiah, as his grandfather had been at the news of

the birth of the King of the Jews." James and John and Peter, the three favorite disciples of Jesus, were prominent apostles, and Herod had James beheaded. (James and Judas are the only ones of the Twelve whose deaths are recorded in the New Testament.) *When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also.* It was now the Passover Season--*the days of unleavened bread,* so called because no leaven, or yeast, was allowed in Jewish homes while the festival lasted, when the Jews were especially hostile to those who differed from them, and Herod, as Josephus says of him, "rejoiced in living in good reputation." He had Peter imprisoned and *delivered to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him.* This was Peter's third imprisonment. There were four sets of men, one for each watch; and four men in each set, two of whom were chained to Peter in his cell, and two were on guard outside, verse 6. Herod intended *after the Passover to bring him forth to the people,* for execution. Herod was nominally a Jew and most careful in all Jewish observances, and executions were not carried out during the Passover, as the festival must not be polluted by the shedding of blood.

II. PETER'S DELIVERANCE, verses 5-11. While Peter *was kept in the prison, prayer was made earnestly of the church.* "The word 'earnest' means 'to stretch out.' It implies a bow drawn to its fullest length and strength. So should our hearts be in prayer"(Griffiths Thomas). The prayer was *unto God.* "I wish that I could just burn those two words into every heart, so that from this time on, whenever we pray, in public or in private, they would stand right before us; and that before we prayed a syllable of prayer we would be sure every time that we had really come into the presence of God and were actually talking to him"(Torrey). The prayer was for *him.* "No kindnesses shown in act are so important or so essential a part of friendship, as prayer for our friend"(J. R. Miller).

It was *when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night,* the night before his trial and execution as planned by Herod, that help came. "God's time to help is when things are brought to their last extremity"(Matthew Henry). "The eventful intervention at the very last moment, and yet at a sufficiently early moment, tested faith. And look how beautifully all bore the test. The man that was to be killed tomorrow was lying quietly sleeping in his cell, and whilst he was asleep Christ was awake, and the brethren were awake. Their faith was tested, and it stood the test, and thereby was strengthened, and Peter's patience and faith were deepened and confirmed"(Maclaren).

The circumstances of Peter's escape are told very minutely, the coming of *the angel,* the *light in the cell,* the awakening of Peter, the brief words to make haste, the falling off of *the chains, the girding* and putting on of *sandals,* and outer cloak, the command to *follow* him, the passing of *the first and the second guard,* the opening of the outer gate of the prison *that leadeth into the city,* the going out and passing on *through one street,* and then being left alone. Peter had been dazed and thought his experience unreal, verse 9, but when *he was come to himself* (recall the similar expression in the parable of the Prodigal Son) *he said, the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod.* "God hath a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of his own when it has come to the greatest extremity. Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for him, and lay God's part on him, and leave it there; duties are ours, events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, 'How wilt thou do this or that?' we lose ground; we have nothing to do there, it is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office and steer his own helm"(Samuel Rutherford).

III. THE DOUBT AND DELIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES, verses 12-17. After some deliberation, Peter went *to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark,* John Mark the Evangelist, *where many were gathered together and were praying. He knocked at the door of the gate,* the gateway leading through the house into the central courtyard (this was not a small house, then, but a prosperous home), and *a maid came to answer, named Rhoda.* She recognized Peter's voice and in her joy left him standing there while she ran to tell the good news. *Thou art mad,* they said first. *It is an angel,* they next declared. *But Peter continued knocking,* and at last he was admitted.

Beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, the customary expression for "to keep silent," Peter told them how his escape had been made,

and bade them tell *James and the brethren.* Peter thus recognized James as the head of the church. This James was the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1.19), and not the brother of John. For his position of leadership see Gal. 2.9; Acts 15.13; 21.18.

And Peter *departed, and went to another place,* away from Jerusalem where he would be safe. "With Peter the last of the Twelve left Jerusalem. It seems surprising to us that with their charge to evangelize the world they had stayed so long. But they had to fix the outlines of the teaching and of the oral tradition which is the basis of the Gospels, and also to determine the elementary principles of church order and worship. To do this required common agreement and consent, which could only be secured by continuous fellowship and residence at the center of affairs. Now, however, sufficient time had elapsed, and when Peter left the city James, the Lord's brother, was already in the position of president—or to use the later term, bishop—of the church at Jerusalem" (Rackham).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, verse 6. "Soldiers act in the East in the capacity of policemen, their duties being similar to those of the French gendarmes, or armed police."

Bound with two chains, verse 6. It was the Roman custom to fasten a chain from the right wrist of a prisoner to the left wrist of a soldier. When extraordinary precautions were taken, as in the case of Peter, the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on each side. Matthew Henry reminds us that tradition "makes a mighty rout about these chains" and claims that one of the soldiers kept them for a sacred relic, that they were long afterward presented to Eudoxia the Empress, and that many miracles were wrought by them. One of the Roman Catholic feast days (the first of August) is called *Festum Vinculorum Petri,* The Feast of Peter's Chains.

A Prisoner Chained to Two Soldiers

Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee, verse 8. Peter had removed his sandals, which were only soles bound on his feet by leather straps or thongs, and had removed his girdle, which confined the folds of his long abba or outer garment. At night this woolen garment was thrown over the owner as a blanket, and therefore was to be then returned if taken in pledge, Ex. 22.26, 27.

The iron gate that leadeth into the city opened to them of its own accord, verse 10. The iron gate which led out upon the street from the prison courtyard would, of course, be strongly secured. Van Lennep, in "Bible Lands," thus describes an oriental city gate to which the prison gate may have been somewhat similar. "The gates are large, massive, and two-leaved, built of heavy timber, plated with iron. A strong iron bar, hooked at one end, hangs from a heavy ring of the same metal, made fast in a strong post, built into the wall behind each fold of the gate. When the gate is closed, the hooks are set into other iron rings, on the back of its folds, enabling the gate to resist a very heavy pressure from without. The lock is massive and of wrought iron, and the long-handled, ponderous key is carried by the keeper of the gate in his belt, or hung from a nail in his little room close by."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What incident first brought Peter into collision with the authorities? What did the latter content themselves with doing on that occasion? Why? In what did the disciples then unite in doing? (Acts 4.13-31.) When and why was Peter again imprisoned? How was he punished? Why was he freed? What did we learn last year about the need of prayer? About what to pray for? About the answer to prayer?

Herod Agrippa I, Persecutor of the Church. The first persecutors of the

disciples were the Sadducees and chief priests (Acts 4.1; 5.17); the next, the Pharisees with Saul as their leader. A new persecutor then arose through the civil authority, in the person of Herod Agrippa I.

Coin of Herod Agrippa I

Herod I, or Herod the Great, as he is better known, died soon after the birth of Jesus, and his kingdom was divided among his three sons. Herod Antipas, the son to whom Galilee and Perea were given, was the Herod who put John the Baptist to death. Aristobulus was another son whom Herod the Great had accused of plotting against him, and who was strangled by order of the court at his father's wish. The son of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great, is known in history as Herod Agrippa I. Josephus calls him "Agrippa the Great."

Between the years 41 and 44 A. D. he ruled all Palestine as had his grandfather, Herod the Great.

His ambition went still farther, he wished to become an independent king, and he needed the favor of the Jews. Because he had prevented Caligula from carrying out his purpose of having his statue placed in the temple, he was already popular with his subjects, despite his introduction of Roman customs. He would court their favor further by persecuting this new sect which the Jewish leaders so hated, and he began with the most prominent apostles, knowing that this would arouse "the expectation of the Jews."

The Death of Herod. Herod had the matter of Peter's escape from prison investigated and ordered the guards put to death. He returned to Cæsarea and soon afterwards a deputation of men from Tyre and Sidon came to see him. Herod addressed them from the throne, and they, wishing to gain his favor, for he had been displeased with them, shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man." In the midst of such adulation, which he craved, he was stricken with a terrible disease and died.

Herod's death in 44 A. D. establishes the date of this lesson as the Passover week of that year.

The Close of "The Acts of Peter." With this lesson we end our study of the life of Peter. Jerusalem has been the headquarters of the Christian Church until now, and Peter has been the leading spirit among the apostles. The center now changes from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, and the leadership, as far as we know from The Acts, to Paul. Peter lived twenty years longer, but we have only incidental allusions to this last part of his life.

Place. The scene of the lesson is Jerusalem. The location of the prison is not known, though many claim that it was the Tower of Antonia. Note that Mark's house seems to have become the place of meeting for the Christians in Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for Peter. And Peter was saved. Equally earnest prayer must have been offered for James. And Herod killed James with the sword. These facts are a challenge to you—to get your pupils' thoughts about the nature of prayer and its answer, and if they are cherishing wrong thoughts, to set them right.

A Sunday-school teacher in a poor district in England spoke about the beautiful weather one Sunday. "Yes," said a little girl, "I know why it is fine today; I asked God last night to let us have a lovely day." "But what if it had rained instead?" asked the teacher. "I should have said that God was thinking about the flowers," the girl answered. That little girl had been well taught.

Why should one pray? What benefits come from prayer? Should prayer consist wholly of petitions? Should prayer be wholly for self? In what spirit should one pray? Is prayer always answered? Is "No" an answer to prayer? Ask your pupils these and other questions about prayer.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. *"Have you heard the news?"* whispered one white-faced Christian to another, as a little band gathered in the

house of John Mark in Jerusalem. *"James, the brother of John, has been beheaded!"* So they told each other, and wept. Some brought a strange story of how the man who arrested him was so impressed at his courage and joy, that he, too, believed in Jesus and was beheaded with James! But nobody knew very much about it. King Herod's officers had worked secretly and quickly.

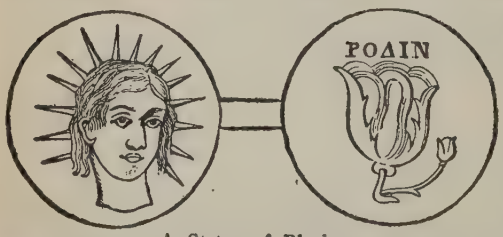
It pleased the Jews! At last Herod had found a way to stop the scowls and whispers of the Jews! What did he care for a band of hated people who followed one Jesus? He would kill them all without fear!

So, next, Herod's officers had orders to seize the most powerful of the hated people. Who was that! It was the Passover and the festivities must be completed, so Peter was put in prison. Tomorrow—that is what Herod said as he saw the crowds in the temple—they should have a notable prisoner to mock tomorrow. That is what the Jewish leaders said as they looked at the great iron gate that kept Peter safe. That is what the disciples said as they sat up all night to pray. That is what Peter's guards told him as he lay down to sleep, chained to two soldiers. But the truly wonderful thing did not wait till tomorrow.—Emily Huntley, in Sunday-School Chronicle.

Peter Delivered from Prison. Peter's time was almost up. On the morrow he was to die. Yet Peter was not worrying. He was sound asleep, so sound asleep that the light did not waken him, and it is said that the angel had to strike him on the side to arouse him. Peter knew what the morrow had in store for him, but his heart was full of peace and he was willing to meet his fate. It was at that moment that God acted. We do not know why he had not intervened before. It is often so. Just when the sickness seems about to end fatally the turn for the better comes. Just when the Allies seemed almost beaten and Germany at the gates of Paris the turn of the tide came and Germany was beaten.

The prison was big and strong. Peter was in its innermost cell. He was chained to two soldiers. Outside his door stood two sentinels and beyond them were other doors locked and barred. How could Peter get out of all that? It looked impossible. But it was done. Things just as impossible and incredible have happened again and again to men and causes and nations. You cannot make a chain that God cannot break, nor a prison that he cannot enter.

How was it done? Silently. Without the enemy knowing anything about it. Soldiers slept on. Sentinels kept watch. No one in the prison saw or heard anything. The agent in the deed was an angel; and one thing is certain today, that whoever delivers us from great peril will always seem an angel to us.



A Statue of Rhodes

Peter thought he was dreaming. It was not until he stood outside in the city, the cold air of the early morning on his face, that he realized it was true and he was free. What a wonderful moment for Peter! No wonder he stood and "considered the thing." It was an equal surprise for his friends. Who answered his knock, and what did she do? Rhoda means Rose. (Here is a reproduction of an interesting coin from the isle of Rhodes. It has on one side a head of Apollos and on the other an opening Easter rose with the name above in Greek, a play upon the name of the isle, Rodos.) What did the friends within the house say? They could not believe it. It was too good to be true. That is what we heard on all sides when news came of the signing of the armistice by the Germans. That there was to be peace so soon seemed in truth too good to be true. We had prayed for victory and had expected victory, yet when victory came we were amazed by it.

What was behind it all? A church on its knees, a church praying night and day for his deliverance. Prayer is the key to all prison doors. We can pray men out of prisons of sin and trouble. Prayer is a power.

A Boy Whose Faith was like Peter's. A poor little waif of a boy, ten or twelve years of age, greatly exhausted by a long-standing disease, was taken to the operating room of the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow to undergo an operation.

His condition, however, was so low and unsatisfactory that there was some fear that his strength might give out during the operation and his spirit pass away. While waiting for the preparations to be completed the little fellow looked towards some students, and in a pitiful, tremulous voice said, "Will one of you gentlemen put up just a wee prayer for a wee boy—just a wee prayer to Jesus for me in my sore trouble?" The surgeon patting him on the shoulder, spoke kindly to him, but, as the boy heard no prayer, he turned his head away, and in childish tones and words he asked Jesus, his Friend, "The friend of boys who love him," to be with him—to have mercy on him in his distress; and as long as he was conscious the voice of the boy was heard in prayer.

Soon the surgeon felt that the prayer had included in its answer some one else, for the coolness of head, steadiness of hand, and delicacy of touch, all came as they were needed, and the operation was completed with more than usual ease, dexterity, and success.

The next morning, as the surgeon stood by the boy's bedside and saw from the placid, comfortable look on his face that his sufferings had been relieved, and all was well with him, he took the little wasted hand, and whispered, "The good Jesus heard your prayer yesterday." A bright, happy, confident look lighted up the boy's face, and with a feeble pressure of the little hand, he said, "I ken'd he wud."—Wonders of Grace.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Psalm 46.1.

God's angels open locks as easily as his sunbeams open rosebuds.—Bishop Warren.

Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure, whate'er he gives, he gives the best.—Samuel Johnson.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does buffeted mean? 2. What does *guile* mean? 3. What does *reviled* mean? 4. In what verse does Peter tell how one should endure wrong treatment from others? 5. How do you treat those who treat you ill? 6. In what verse does Peter say that we should imitate Christ? 7. What does our Golden Text mean?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: HOW PRAYER HELPS

Additional Material: Matthew 7.7-11; Mark 9.28, 29; John 16.24; James 5.16; 1 John 5.14, 15.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Late one evening a gentleman came home unexpectedly, and found his house closed. He could not arouse any one, and he had no key with him. Going to a near-by drug store, he telephoned to the central office several miles away, and asked the one in charge to ring up his house number and tell the one who answered that he was on the front steps, waiting to get in. The ringing of the telephone near his room aroused the sleeping butler to answer it, and soon he was at the door letting in the owner of the house.

It was a long way round by which this gentleman accomplished his purpose, but it was a very efficient way. In our lesson today the disciples who are in the same city with Peter, they in their homes and he in prison, can do nothing themselves to free him. We see them send their messages a long way round by the way of the throne of God, and the prison gate opens to let Peter pass through. Why was Peter imprisoned?

The Characters in the Drama. Herod cannot sleep that night. He is rehearsing on his bed the words in which he will harangue the populace around the scaffold in the morning, and is gloating in anticipation over the plaudits that will salute his ears. And the Apostle's friends cannot sleep; they are held before God in an agony of supplication. But the man whose life is in the balance sleeps, with the sleep of blissful ignorance, of conscious innocence, of happy tranquillity. "Hapless mortal," might not one say? "So defenceless, so passive, how thou art made the prey of circumstances! They are marching down upon thee; they are stalking thee, as the hunter his quarry. And thou dost not note their approach; thou dost not hear their stealthy tread; their shadow does not fall upon thy vision. Thy very life is hanging on a hair—and thou sleepest!"

Might not one speak thus? Yes, if there were not one more Person in the drama, he who is in the background of every drama. There is the enemy

plotting, there are the friends praying; and the man himself around whom all the menace and the intercession are gathering has shut his eyes and quieted himself to slumber. Because there too is he who, because he slumbereth not nor sleepeth, giveth his beloved sleep. God is there in the palace; there in the house of prayer; there in the prison, keeping all the threads of the drama in his own hands; holding the tyrant's power in derision, hearing the prayer that ascends to his holy habitation, responding to the trust of his child, whom he is lulling to sleep on his bosom. And now it is his time to work. The final act is ready to be launched upon the stage. The moment of deliverance is appointed, and already its messenger and instrument is on the wing to loose him that is appointed unto death. How well may Peter sleep when God is watching over his bed and preparing his awaking!—Dr. Robert Law, in The Grand Adventure.

How Prayer Helped British Soldiers. A company of British soldiers were holding a Belgian village against a superior force of Germans, when four men became separated from the main force. Seeing the door of a house open they rushed in, hoping to gain the roof and eventually escape. But they found there was no ladder by which to reach the skylight. Certain death would be their fate if they left the house. So they remained in an upper room to await the coming of the Germans.

It was Sunday, and the corporal suggested that they hold a little service. After singing and reading from his khaki Testament, he said to his comrades, "Men, you know I am not fit for this job, but let us pray." As he prayed, heavy footsteps were heard coming up the stairs. The door was flung open. The corporal kept on praying as the German officer clicked his heels as he came to "Attention." Evidently moved by the sight, the officer quietly crept down stairs and closed the door. The men were not again molested. When darkness came they were able to make their escape and rejoin their army.

Does Prayer Always Bring the Help Asked For? Whom did Herod put to death before he imprisoned Peter? Who was James? Don't you think the church prayed that James' life might be spared? Why was not their prayer answered in some miraculous way? Were not prayers offered for the lives of most of our boys who fell in France? Were they not sincere prayers? Were they not right prayers? Why were not the lives of these brave soldiers spared?

In a single sentence the apostle John gives the condition which must be fulfilled if our prayers are to prevail with God. "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." The church did not know that it was the will of God that Peter should not at this time, like Stephen and James, suffer a martyr's death, but they prayed earnestly, nevertheless, that Peter's life might be spared. They must have prayed submissively, asking only that their prayers be granted if it were God's will. What did Jesus mean when he said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"? He did not mean that we have a claim on God which he is bound to acknowledge if we ask it. He meant that whatever we ask in the name and in the spirit of Jesus himself, whatever, therefore, is in accordance with the divine will, will be granted us. Our prayer will be answered in our way, if it is the right way, but if it is not, then in God's own way; as Whittier beautifully says:

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys.—Hugh Miller.

No kindnesses shown in act are so important and so essential a part of friendship as prayer for our friend.—J. R. Miller.

Work for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why have we dropped our study of the Acts? 2. To whom did Peter write his First Epistle? 3. Why did he write this letter? 4. What words of Jesus to Nathanael does the first verse recall? 5. How does Peter say we should bear an injury? 6. What did a great man whose birthday we recently celebrated say about malice and charity? 7. What does the Golden Text mean?

Note-Book Work. In Prison and at the House of John Mark.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THINGS WROUGHT BY PRAYER Or, PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF PETER

Additional Material: Luke 22.31, 32; Acts 4.31; 10.9.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What two strong personalities have we in our lesson? What relation was this Herod to Herod the Great? What do you know about him? Herod Agrippa on the throne, Peter in prison—which is the stronger man? Herod is the typical persecutor; Peter, the typical leader of the church. Herod is the favorite of Rome and the popular idol of the Jewish people; Peter is alone, helpless, securely guarded by soldiers and chains in an inner prison. Herod has all the resources of the great Roman Empire back of him; Peter has back of him the prayers of a faithful company of followers of Jesus Christ. Which one is defeated? Why? To quote a line of Tennyson's, Peter's friends are

Battering at the gates of heaven with stones of prayer,

and their prayer prevails; Peter is freed.

The Characters in the Drama. See the Second Topic.

Peter's Release was Wrought by Prayer. In such an emergency as this does not a prayer-meeting appear absurd? Here is a man in prison, surrounded by a tenfold defence. The material obstacles are overwhelming. What is the use of a prayer-meeting? Can we pray a man out of his chains, and through the prison gate, and through the assembled soldiery? The world regards it as a grotesque expedient. And perhaps there are many Christians who would regard it as legitimate and reasonable to pray for the quietness of Peter's spirit, that he might be kept in boldness of faith and in open communication with his Lord, but who would regard a prayer for his release as trespassing upon forbidden ground. Does not this timidity very frequently spoil the range of our petitions, and rob us of the promised inheritance? If the dominion of prayer is to be limited by the prison gates, we are reduced to a pitiful impoverishment.

I see no need to give our supplications the severe restrictions which many Christians impose. I would rather exercise a glorious liberty, and if Peter is in prison I would pray for the opening of the prison doors, and for the apostle's bodily release.

"And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him." That was a great moving mission begotten by the ministry of prayer. I will not at the bidding of unbelief reduce the narrative to mere poetry and regard the incident as a commonplace event for which, if we knew everything, we could find a commonplace explanation. It is one of the profoundest beliefs in my own life that there was a vital connection between that prayer-meeting and the prison.—Condensed from The Silver Lining, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

God's Answers to Prayers Ought not to Surprise Us. They said unto her, Thou art mad! How suggestive an incident! They were praying for an answer; the answer comes to the door; and it strikes them as incredible. Now, God's answer to our prayers ought not to surprise us into incredulity. Those momentous occurrences ought to be daily commonplaces in our lives. The responses of the Almighty should be grand familiarities. Why should we suppose the herald to be mad? God is good! God is faithful! The answer often comes knocking at the door but we don't let it in, and we never know that the answer has been given. We are in an unexpectant mood, and we have never suspected the wealth which the Lord would have left at our gate.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in The Silver Lining.

A Deliverance Wrought by God in Answer to Prayer. A mother of my acquaintance had a child taken alarmingly ill. She sent for the physician. The doctor began at once vigorously to apply the accustomed remedies, but all was in vain. Death seemed close at hand and inevitable. At length he left the child, and sat down by the window, looking out. He seemed to the agonized mother to have abandoned her darling. She could do nothing but pray, and even her prayer was but an inarticulate and unvoiced cry for help. Suddenly the physician started from his seat. "Send and see if there be any jimson weed in the yard!" he cried. His order was obeyed; the poisonous weed was found. The remedies were instantly changed, and it was found that the child had swallowed enough of the seeds of this deadly weed to have killed a man. The physician subsequently said that in that five minutes every kindred case he

had ever known in a quarter century's practice passed before his mind. Among them was the one case which suggested the real, but before hidden cause of the protracted and dreadful convulsions,—and the child was saved. Now is there anything unphilosophical or inconsistent in the belief that at the critical moment, a loving God, answering the mother's helpless cry, flashed on the mind of the physician the thought that saved the child?—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

One Way of Thinking of Intercessory Prayer. "Our topic in the Bible Study Class this morning was intercessory prayer," said Margaret to her roommate. "Dr. Lawson spoke of it as if it were an essential part of the Christian's life, and the class seemed to take the same attitude. But I don't believe it. Do you, Evelyn?"

The older girl picked up a fallen leaf and studied its rich coloring before she answered, "Yes, under certain conditions. Why not?"

"It isn't reasonable!" protested Margaret. "If the relation between God and ourselves is really personal, like that of father and child, as Christ taught that it is, then why should anyone need another to pray for him?"

"I felt that way about it until a year ago," Evelyn answered slowly. "And then, during those months when I was so desperately sick and the odds seemed all against me, I had a strange experience. I think I had always had a strong personal faith since childhood, and believed that nothing could rob me of it. But when the pain and fatigue of those long months had weakened and unnerved me, I little by little lost all my desire to live—all my interest in life. I am sure that I still believed passively that there is a God, and that he is an all-wise and loving God; but I seemed to have lost all sense of personal communion with him—all real consciousness of his presence. Then one day Dr. Stanley called at the hospital to see me. He had always appealed to me as a college pastor, although I had never known him very well as a friend. I was too weak to say much, but he somehow grasped the fact that I was being swallowed up by the darkness; and before he left he knelt at my bedside without permission or apology and offered up a prayer that I shall never forget: it was so simple and fervent, so intimate—so powerful. As I lay there wonderingly,—just listening,—tears crept down my face, and that little sick room suddenly became a shrine. At least one of the meanings of intercession became very clear to me then. I was all out of tune with God and with life. He was in close communion with God and in ardent touch with life. So ever since that hour I have thought of earthly intercessors as tuners, whose sensitiveness to God's voice and contact with human hearts enables them to bring the two into harmony. I know it's not by any means a full answer to your questions, but it satisfied me."

Margaret pressed her friend's hand affectionately. "It satisfies me, too," she said gratefully.—Youth's Companion.

The Law of Prayer and Law of Harvest. Prayer is a force. When God created the universe of forces he made a place for the play of the prayer-force. This force is not an intruder, or upstart. It is at home in human life. A kingdom was provided for it from the foundation of the world. It does not annihilate other forces, or act independently of them. It coöperates with other forces for the securing of desired ends. According to the New Testament all answers to prayer are conditioned. These conditions are fixed and can no more be changed than can the conditions which the chemist deals with in his laboratory. The law of prayer is as sacred and eternal as the law of gravitation. Laws cannot be suspended by the repetition of pious formulas. There is a harvest law in the physical world, and there is a harvest law in the world of the soul. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. This law cannot be abrogated by prayer. A man who indulges to excess in alcoholic liquors for twenty years cannot by an earnest prayer change in an hour or a day the processes which have been started in his blood and body. What he has sown he must reap. You cannot change the law of gravitation by a prayer. The man who drives his automobile over a precipice goes to the bottom no matter how many prayers may be offered by the horrified onlookers. The man who sows his field with tares cannot change those tares into roses by offering up a series of Paternosters. You cannot set a great city blazing and then stop the conflagration by falling on your knees. This is a truth which was forgotten by the enthusiastic persons who thought that the war could have been checked at the beginning, if only groups of believing souls had prayed. You cannot abro-

gate the law of the harvest by your supplications. For a generation Europe had sown bayonets, and when the time arrived for it to reap battles, it was too late to stop the war by prayer. How pathetic it was to see the pious Russians on their knees! Of course God could not grant their request. For generations the government of Russia had been tyrannical and corrupt. Rulers in Church and State had been shamefully recreant to their trust, and the very fabric of society had grown rotten. How absurd, therefore, for any one to suppose that God could give victory to the arms of any nation which had trampled on his laws so outrageously and so long. There are times when God plainly says to a nation: "Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear." There is a law of prayer and there is a law of the harvest, and the first cannot annihilate or suspend the latter.—Condensed from Old Truths and New Facts, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

The Adult Class and the Cottage Prayer Meeting. Two clergymen were comparing notes. One said to the other: "My parish has become a huge prayer meeting, and every activity and interest of the church feels the beneficent effects."

"And how did it happen?" asked the other.

Quickly came the reply, "It did not *happen;* it was planned by the two Adult Classes of my Sunday-school. They began to hold cottage meetings a few weeks ago at various outer points, and now the entire parish is swept by the contagion of the movement."

Such a campaign of Christian service may be undertaken anywhere, either by a class or a group of classes, and ought to commend itself to all thoughtful men and women of the church school. The effort should not be forced. Where there is a wide-awake social consciousness in the Adult Class, the effort will be made naturally and without noise of trumpet. Are you willing to be the first person to volunteer? Then be sure of this—another will volunteer his services. By that time you are prepared to go ahead. A timely suggestion to the committee on social service and evangelization of the class will make the matter public property, and the movement is substantially on foot. After that, the momentum gained will make the movement irresistible.—C. W. Laufer, in Adult Bible Class Magazine.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. *When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also.* When a man finds that a certain course of conduct is receiving popular applause he is led on to further excesses. A public speaker descends to a coarse and vulgar jest, and because it pleases the baser sort in the audience, and the speaker is awarded a round of applause, he is prone to descend to still farther depths of degradation.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

2. Many a good official has had his head chopped off *to please the Jews* and help the next election. Many a good, faithful man or woman has lost head in store, office, and mill "to please the Jews."—W. H. Ridgway.

3. *He proceeded to seize Peter also.* Rulers to whom their subjects have been simply pawns in the game they played.

4. *Prayer was made earnestly.* The art of prayer. "To pray with the heart and the understanding," said Coleridge, "to believe that God hears prayer and yet wisely doeth what pleaseth him, this surely is the highest exercise of the faculties of the human spirit." See Quiet Talks on Prayer, by S. D. Gordon; The Meaning of Prayer, by Dr. Fosdick; Drawing on Unseen Resources, Missionary Review of the World, April, 1914; Lecture III in Old Truths and New Facts, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

5. *Which opened to them of its own accord.*

Yet this one thing I learn to know,
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law unseen and still.—Helen Hunt Jackson.

Work for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. Why have we dropped our study of Acts? What do we know about Peter's last years? 3. To whom did Peter write his First Epistle? 4. When and from where was it probably written? 5. Why was it written? 6. What were Peter's ideals of Christian conduct? 7. What were his ideals about retaliation? 8. What evils does he especially condemn? 9. In what respects does he point out Christ as our Example?

PETER WRITES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LIVING

(May be used with Temperance Applications)

Golden Text

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked. 1 John 2.6

LESSON 1 Peter 2.1-5, 11, 12, 19-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 5.1-10

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Peter

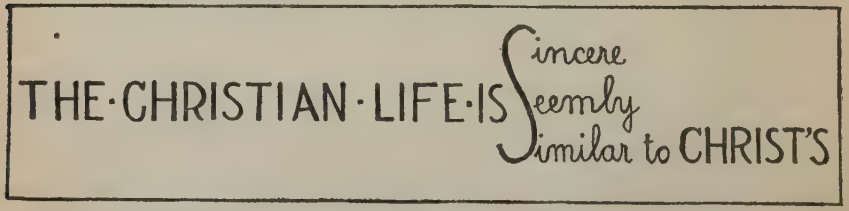
1 PETER 2.1 Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; 3 if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: 4 unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men but with God elect, precious, 5 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

19 For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it* ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. SINCERE LIVING, verses 1-5. *Therefore.* This chapter closely follows the first chapter, where Peter has been urging mutual love: the sins he now asks his reader to put away are those that destroy love. *Putting away*—as one would an old garment: "Cast it away with indignation, never put it on more"—*All wickedness and all guile. Guile* is deceit in words: "It comprehends flattery, falsehood and delusion which is a crafty imposing upon another's ignorance or weakness, to his damage." *And envies.* "Everything that may be called envy which is a grieving at the good and welfare of another, at his abilities, prosperity, fame, or successful labor" (Matthew Henry). *And all evil speakings.* All detraction of another: the same Greek word is rendered *backbiting* in 2 Cor. 12.20; Rom. 1.30.

The next four verses are crowded with thought. They contain three figures of speech, one merging into the other in a remarkable way. First, Peter com-

pares his readers to *new born babes.* In 1.23 he speaks of them as having been born again, and his words recall Christ's assertion that "Except ye turn and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." "Some New Testament writers were adepts in keeping their readers humble—sometimes perhaps by giving them thoughts too deep for ordinary men to explain, sometimes again by telling them quite bluntly that they knew very little and were only at the beginning of their explorations"(J. M. E. Ross). As new born babes the apostle bids them *long for the spiritual milk which is without guile.* "That is, the pure doctrine of the gospel, as delivered in the Epistles and Gospels; and as preached by the apostles and their successors. The figure is very expressive: as a child newly born shows an immediate desire for that nourishment, and that only, which is its proper food, so they, being just born of God, should receive nothing that is not suited to that new nature"(Clarke). And the object they were to keep in view was *that you may grow thereby into salvation.* "Even an apostle will be content with an audience of babes if only they are hungry babes. Their hunger is the pledge that by and by they shall be babes no more"(Ross).

And then the apostle adds: *if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* There is here an echo of Ps. 34.8, but the next verse shows that by *the Lord,* Christ is meant: *unto whom coming, a living stone:* see Isa. 8.14; 28.16. "In this metaphorical description of Jesus Christ, he is called a stone, to denote his invincible strength and everlasting duration, and to teach his servants that he is their protection and security, the foundation on which they are built, and a rock of offence to all their enemies. He is a *living* stone, having eternal life in himself, and being the prince of life to all his people"(Matthew Henry). *Rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious.* The Chosen One of God, chosen to be the World's Redeemer.

The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner, Ps. 118.22.

"Our Lord had seen in the words an unconscious forecast of his own immediate fate and ultimate glory(Mt. 21.42), and it is so that the apostle uses it here. These little Christian communities seemed very weak and helpless, tossed all about by circumstances, mere derelicts in a purposeless welter. But no! There was something firm beneath them, after all, a Living Stone, and the security of their strength and permanence lay in this that they, the living stones, were joined to him and built in him"(Ross).

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. This is the apostle's second figure of speech, he calls his readers living stones, and doubtless had in mind Christ's words to him, "Upon this rock I will build my church." Mt. 16.18. As living stones, ye are built up a spiritual house: the Christian Church made up of living, immortal souls, an infinitely nobler institution than the Jewish temple.

To be a holy priesthood: this is the apostle's third figure of speech. It recalls Ex. 19.6: ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation and also Rev. 5.10; Heb. 13.15. *To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*—the only High Priest. "To the Jew there was no dignity so royal as that of a priest: no privilege greater than that of the man who was allowed to approach God, and lay gifts upon God's altar, and provide in his own personality and work a meeting point between the two worlds."

II. THE SEEMLY LIFE, verses 11, 12. *Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims,* writes Peter. This may be taken in the literal sense, for the Jews were scattered throughout Asia Minor and therefore might consider themselves in exile, but probably Peter is here speaking metaphorically; his readers as the people of God were living in exile on earth, for heaven was their true home. Since they had but a short time to stay here, they must live their brief life nobly. *Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.* "The greatest mischief which sin does to man is this, it wars against the soul; it destroys the moral liberty of the soul; it weakens and debilitates the soul by impairing the faculties, it robs the soul of its comfort and peace." *Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers.* "It is evident from various phrases in the letter that a good deal of mud-throwing had been going on: it has ever been a part of the machinery of persecution to start wild rumors and scatter slanders. Modern missionary literature is full of illustrations of this. These things cannot be argued

down: they must be lived down. And the Christian character did almost as much as the contents of the Christian gospel to turn the tide and lay the foundations of Christendom"(Ross). *That they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God:* how like an echo from the Sermon on the Mount this sounds! "Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." "So Christ's pilgrim leaves a track of light behind him: he is a witness: let the world for its own sake take heed. The phrase *in the day of visitation* suggests a fear in the apostle's heart lest the response to this witness might not be immediate: it might have to bide God's own time. The hour of visitation which will be the hour also of illumination will come, and then all the quiet witness will tell: the holy walk, the patient endurance, the lofty testimony, the life that is fair to see,—it will all tell"(Ross).

III. REASONS FOR PATIENCE UNDER UNJUST TREATMENT, verses 19-25. Here Peter counsels servants, *Be in subjection to your masters with all fear: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward,* verse 18. "Peter's intense and immediate desire was to spread the fair fame of Christ, and he would have Christians of all sorts, however humble of station, consider how this might best be done by their own influence and behavior." Three reasons Peter gives them for such acceptable behavior: first, a sense of their vocation—*for thereunto were ye called* to endure, *suffer wrongfully, for conscience toward God,* for consciousness of God. "When some of Perpetua's comrades, in that famous North African scene of martyrdom, pointed the finger of scorn at their judge and said, 'God will judge thee,' Perpetua set a watch upon her lips, and suffered nothing to escape but psalms of praise. The onlookers noted that: it reminded them of the Supreme Example. Here, too, was trustful suffering, that consciousness of God which the apostle recommends."

The second reason Peter gives is because of their Great Example, they *should follow in Christ's steps.* And he stops to recount how Christ was innocent and long-suffering, and we find in his words references to Isaiah 53, to the Sermon on the Mount, and to the story of his Passion. "The power of that Perfect Pattern has not ceased with the passing of the centuries. Far away from Galilee and Jerusalem, men are walking in the very footprints. In different lands and climes, amid conditions undreamed of then, they have failed to discover any higher standard of conduct, any more perfect law of life"(Ross).

Peter's third reason is because of their redemption: *who his own self bare our own sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.* "And here he recalls from all life's foolish wanderings and false lures: *ye were going astray like sheep: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.* Peter himself could write feelingly about such a wandering and such a return. The shadow of the Cross had driven him away: the Love that was in the wound prints had welcomed him home"(Ross).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I beseech you to abstain from fleshly lusts, verse 11. With good reason does Peter use most solemn words of entreaty. The peril at all times is great. The flesh warreth against the spirit. We cannot do the things that we would. But for these men the danger was extreme. Some of them had lived in surroundings where such sins were counted a part of religious duty; were sanctioned and indulged in by those of the convert's own blood.—Dr. J. Rawson Lumby.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing upon the Lesson. Which one of the patriarchs was noted for his guile? What misery did his guile work? What parable did we study last year which denounced hypocrisy? What part did envy have in patriarchal history?

The First Epistle of Peter. Peter wrote his first Epistle to the Christians of the chief provinces of Asia Minor, 1.1. It is thought that they were Christians of pagan origin, rather than converted Jews dispersed among the Gentiles. It is believed by most scholars that the letter was written from Rome (termed Babylon in 5.13) about the end of 63 or the beginning of 64 A. D.

It is a letter of advice and a message of hope. Peter's purpose in writing it

was to confirm his readers in their faith, to comfort and encourage them in their troubles, and to advise them as to their conduct, especially in times of persecution.

The letter has caught the spirit of Jesus. Throughout are echoes of familiar passages in the Gospels, and as we read we feel almost certain that in Peter's mind as he wrote were these words of Jesus.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Christ left you an example, that you should follow in his steps, wrote Peter. The patience of Christ of which Peter speaks in our lesson text as an example for us was his patience when unjustly treated. But he is an example also in his patience as a Teacher. He never lost his temper, never became impatient or discouraged, however dull of comprehension were his pupils, however slow they were to put into practice what he had taught them. He that saith he abideth in him ought also to walk even as he walked.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: HOW TO TREAT THOSE WHO WRONG US Or, OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

Lesson Material: 1 Peter 2.19-24. Story Material: 1 Samuel 26.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. We have finished the early chapters of Acts and there are no more stories about Peter in the Bible.

When Peter first came to Jesus what did Jesus say he would make of Peter if he followed him? Peter did indeed become a fisher of men. What were Jesus' last words to Peter? Yes, "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs." What did Jesus mean by these words? Jesus wanted Peter the Fisherman to become Peter the Shepherd, and care for the men and women whom Jesus called his sheep, and the boys and girls whom he called his lambs. Peter did become the shepherd, and in his work of caring for the followers of Jesus he wrote a letter to them which we call the First Epistle of Peter.

Among other things, Peter told them how to treat those who treated them badly. They had many things to suffer because they were Christians. The heathen people about them were unkind to them, and the Roman rulers punished them and even put some of them to death because they were Christ's followers. Peter told them to follow in Jesus' steps. Jesus had been persecuted but he had borne his persecutions with a noble spirit. What does the 22d verse say about it? What does the next verse say?

How to Treat Those Who Wrong us. David had the right attitude toward one who grievously wronged him. David had done no evil to King Saul; he had helped Saul all he could and had been a true friend to him. And Saul repaid him with hatred and even sought to take his life. But Saul's evil treatment did not make David a rebel, nor did it destroy the honor he paid Saul as king. He treated Saul with respect and refused to harm him when he had the chance.

Our best example of how to treat those who wrong us is Jesus Christ. What does our Golden Text say? And how did Jesus walk, that is, how did he act when he had been ill-treated? Men gave him back evil for good, but that did not make him hate them. He bore it all with a patience that has made the world love him. "Christ left you an example, that you should follow in his steps," wrote Peter. What does the 23d verse say Christ did when wrongfully treated?

If you follow in Christ's steps, what will happen? You will have a soul free from all hatred and bitterness, and that is worth much. You may shame your enemies and turn them into friends. As Peter says in the 12th verse of our lesson, "they may by your good works which they behold, glorify God."

You will gain the approval of men and of God. The fellow who bears well his punishment for some crime is no hero. It is the innocent sufferer and the martyr who bear their undeserved pain and wrong with patience and courage whom the world admires. "For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently?" questions Peter. And then he tells what sort of patience wins God's approval: what does he say? "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

A good conscience, a heart free from bitterness, the approval of men and of

God—all these rewards are infinitely greater than the satisfaction that you might feel at the moment were you to "hit back and get even." Anyone can do the latter, but it takes a Christian to do the former.

Kill your Enemy with Kindness. Over three hundred years ago, in 1588, a great Spanish fleet, called the Armada, started from Spain to conquer England. They were not only going to master England and Scotland; they were also hoping to destroy the Protestant religion and burn all the heretics. When they reached the North Sea there was a great storm and many of the fine ships were wrecked.

Early one morning, there was a minister in his study in a little village on the coast of Scotland. All at once the door opened and the village constable came in. He told the minister, whose name was James Melville, that the night before a ship had been cast ashore near the village and two hundred and fifty Spaniards had been captured. He asked the minister what to do with them. "There is only one thing to do with them," said James Melville. "We will show them what good Christians there are in Scotland." So they went and invited them to the church and made a feast for them, and took care of them till they returned to Spain. We are told that when the admiral in command of that fleet reached home he went to see the king and begged him to have no more wars with the English and Scotch, who had been so kind to them. They had been killed with kindness.

One of the best ways to master and overthrow an enemy is to disarm him. If you can take away his weapon you can do what you want with him. The easiest and surest way to take away the weapon of someone who is disagreeable and unkind is to be kind to him. This is what we mean by "killed with kindness." It is the only kind of killing that is not forbidden in the sixth commandment.—Dr. Stuart Nye Hutchison, in For the Children's Hour.

Let us Walk even as He Walked. An imitator is one who looks at someone else and tries to be like him. Little boys like to imitate their fathers. They watch, and whatever their fathers do, they try to do, too. Little girls love to imitate their mothers.

Not only do we imitate when we are little, but we are imitators all our lives. If there is some one whom we admire very much, we are sure to try to do as he does. It is very important what sort of people we imitate. If they are good, we, too, will be good; if they are bad, we will be like them.

Paul tells us to be imitators of God. That is the best advice that was ever given to children. Imitate Jesus, and your life will be like his.

Let us see how we can do this. What did Jesus do that we can imitate? He kept himself unspotted from sin. Let me tell you what this means. Some day, when you were very small, your mother put a clean dress on you and told you not to get any spots on it. But there was a fine mud-puddle in front of the house, and you forgot all about the clean dress; and the first thing you knew, it was spotted with mud. Every time we do a mean thing, or tell a lie, or lose our tempers, our souls are spotted like that dress with the mud on it. Jesus wants us to keep our characters spotless. That is what he did; and if we are imitators of him, we will try very hard to be like him.

There was another thing that Jesus did that we ought to imitate. He went about doing good. Someone was telling me of a little boy she knew. She said, "He goes around trying to see what mischief he can get into." Jesus went about trying to see what good he could do. Suppose we try that, boys and girls. See how much good we can do in a day. It is much more fun than trying to see how much mischief we can get into.

Long ago there was a little Greek slave girl. She was ragged and dirty and untidy and ignorant, because she did not know any better, for there had never been anyone to teach her. One day she was walking along one of the streets of Athens, when she came to a beautiful fountain. There was the statue of a beautiful woman above the fountain. She looked at the statue for a few moments, and then she looked down into the water and noticed that her face was dirty. She made up her mind that she would come back the next day with a clean face, like the face of the statue. So the next day, when she came her face was clean. Then she saw that the woman's hair was neat and tidy. She looked down into the water and saw how tousled hers was, and said to herself, "I'll make my hair like hers before I come back tomorrow." The next day her hair was neat, and her old, torn dress was mended and clean. And so, day by

day, as she looked at the beautiful statue, she became finer and neater herself. That is what we are to do. We are to look every day at Jesus, and try every day to be a little more like him. That is the best way to be "imitators of God, as dear children."—Condensed from For the Children's Hour, by Dr. Stuart Nye Hutchison.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Luke 6.27, 28.

O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.—Whittier.

The true way to overcome evil is to melt it with fiery coals of gentleness.—Dr. Maclaren.

Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it.—Spurgeon.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Jesus say we should love God? (Lk. 10.27.) 2. How did Jesus say we should love others? (Lk. 10.27.) 3. What did Jesus say in Jn. 14.23 that we must do if we love him? 4. Whom does John say we should love? 5. Why ought we to love one another? 6. How can we show our love to others? 7. How did God show his love for us? 8. How can we prove our love to God?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE NOBILITY OF PATIENCE UNDER PROVOCATION Or, OF SELF-CONTROL

Additional Material: Job 2.7-10; James 1.4; 1 Peter 3.17, 18; 4.12-16.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Who is the hero in the last part of the Book of Acts? What becomes of Peter? What do we know about the last years of his life? Where and how does tradition say he died? What records of his have come down to us? To whom did he write his First Epistle? When? Why?

The Nobility of Patience under Provocation. See the third topic, page 119.

Being like Washington. Last week we celebrated the birthday of George Washington. Did you ever think that in some respects he is more imitable than many other great personages? His genius did not lie in an exceptionable military insight, in profound thinking, nor in brilliant oratory. But he had in an admirable degree "the simple and common qualities that are given to all of us, if we would only make the best of them: an everlasting patience that tried first one method of meeting difficulties and then another, until the difficulties vanished; a superb self-control, not to be shaken by others' petulance or wilfulness or violence; an infinite capacity of self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, which put the thought of country before any thought of petty pride or personal gratification."

Icebergs and Saints. "I don't see," said Robert Kittredge to his mother, "how old Deacon Bradbury can be so serene when he has so much to put up with at home. I think he must have been born a saint!"

"If you had known Deacon Bradbury as long as I have you would know that he wasn't born a saint," said the mother. "I have known him more than forty years, and I can assure you that he wasn't born a saint. He was one of the most impulsive and quick-tempered young men I ever knew."

"Then how did he come to be so patient and quiet?" asked Robert.

"I think," said the mother, "that he would tell you that it is because long years ago he saw the folly of his quick temper, and began deliberately to curb it and to acquire the habit of restraint. That is a hard thing for young persons to understand; you look at the ripened saints about you and you think of only the finished product. You don't see that it has been the achievement of years of striving against desperate handicaps, and so you talk of 'born saints.' There is no such thing.

"Some persons are born with a better start than others, but everyone has had his own peculiar battle to fight. If he hadn't he would be no better than a plaster saint adorning a niche in the wall somewhere. Sainthood, Robert, is built up by years of work. Do you remember the iceberg we saw last year on our trip abroad? Do you remember that you asked me what made it go in one direction, while the wind and surface waves were going in the other? The reason was, as I told you, that two-thirds of the iceberg was below the surface of the

water, and there were currents far down beneath that were carrying the iceberg along with them, regardless of winds and surface currents.

"That is the way with people. Two-thirds of us are hidden down out of sight of the world. That is the region of thoughts, ideals, emotions, secret habits and imagination. When some man high in public esteem suddenly falls into disgrace it means that the two-thirds of him that was out of sight was running counter to what he was professing in public. And when some man like Deacon Bradbury lives a life of serenity in the midst of surface currents that are trying to carry him in the other direction, it means that the two-thirds of him you don't see are reaching down into currents of patience and peace, currents that he has been establishing for years.

"I hope you won't be fooled or discouraged by thinking of born saints. Just keep the hidden two-thirds of your life—your dreams and ideals and imagination—set in the right direction, and the current some day will set straight and carry you strong into some such haven of peace as Deacon Bradbury enjoys."—Youth's Companion.

Have Your Behavior Seemly. "Where is Jack?" asked Mr. Rogers, as he came in at six o'clock. "He was late to dinner last night, and he's going to be late again tonight."

"I saw him with that Jones girl," answered his daughter Dorothy. "She is a new girl in town, very pretty, but terribly bold. I'm sure she's not nice. I do wish Jack wouldn't go with her."

Presently the door opened, and Jack came in. "Jack," said his father, "I want to show you something."

Relief and interest showed instantly in the boy's face. The dreaded question was not to be asked, after all. Mr. Rogers led the way to his workroom in the attic. There were his carpenter-bench and his tools and his lathe, and in the corner was the dynamo that worked it. Jack had seen them all many times.

"What is it, father?" he asked.

Mr. Rogers laid his hand upon the dynamo. "Jack, by means of this, a mysterious power becomes mine. We call it electricity, but no one knows what it is. We only know that *if we treat it in the right way,* it will enable us to do wonderful things. It will work our mills, and light our houses and our streets, and run our cars. It will enable man to do more than any other power that has been discovered. But at the same time, *if you treat it in the wrong way, it will strike you dead.*"

"Yes, father, I know that," said Jack.

His father turned toward him with an earnestness that Jack had never before seen in his face. "There is another power, very like it in results. There is the mysterious feeling that men have for women and women have for men. Treat that right and it will bless your life and ennoble it, and make you ten times, yes, a hundred times, the man you could ever be without it. Nothing on earth will do so much for you if you treat it right. But treat that feeling wrong, and it will curse you, and blast your life, and kill your immortal soul!"

For a moment they looked each other square in the eye. Then together they went downstairs in silence. In the hall below, Jack put his hand on his father's arm. "I know what you mean father, and I know it's true!" he whispered.—Youth's Companion.

A Conqueror He.

"No laurel decks the brow,
Nor trump of fame
Sounds to posterity
His humble name.

"But truly great the man—
A Conqueror he—
Who over self obtains
The mastery."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. With malice toward none, with charity to all.—Lincoln.

A living, loving Christian—true of tongue, honest of heart, pure of conduct and yet lovable in daily life, is the unanswerable argument for Christianity.—T. L. Cuyler.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How does John speak of himself in his Gospel? 2. Why did he not say instead "that disciple who loved Jesus"? (The thought that gladdened his heart was not his love for Jesus but Jesus' love for him.) 3. How was Jesus' love for mankind shown? 4. What was Jesus' last question to Peter? 5. How did he tell him to show it? 6. How did Jesus tell us to show our love for him? (Jn. 14. 23.) 7. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Good Samaritan? 8. How does John tell us to love in 1 Jn. 3.18? 9. What is the great chapter about love in the Bible? (1 Cor. 13.) 10. What can our class do to prove our love for Jesus?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: IDEALS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

Additional Material: Romans 12.17-21; 1 Peter 4.1 to 5.11; 2 Peter 1.5-7.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Dr. George Clarke Peck was once watching an experienced bricklayer and noting how at the end of every few courses of bricks he paused in his work and used a plumbline and spirit-level with great care. Here, he pushed a brick forward; there, with the handle of his trowel, pushed one back; yonder, he drove one a trifle deeper into the mortar. "I remember how, as a boy, I thought such precision wasted," he comments. "Life, however, teaches us—sometimes in bitterness—that the time spent in plumbing one's work is quite as important as the work itself. I do not mean that we should forever be overhauling ourselves and squaring our conduct, but that we should not lay many courses of bricks in the structure of life without pausing to see if the wall rises true."

Do our walls rise true? As we pause in our study of the lives of Peter and John to spend a few Sundays upon their words we have an opportunity of hanging God's plumbline at the angles of our conduct and of using the divine spirit-level to see if our work squares with righteousness. Peter's ideals of Christian living is our theme today.

Peter's Ideals of Christian Conduct. We think of Peter as a man of action rather than of meditation, but before he could write those verses from his first Epistle he had thought long and had thought deeply. In the first two verses, in truth, the whole Christian life is described; for does it not consist in putting away all wickedness and in growing into salvation? If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, continues Peter, the Lord who was the living stone rejected of men but with God most precious, then you also are living stones. There are those who might be called dead stones, people whose hearts are spiritually dead, who are useless as building stones in the temple of the community of Christians. Christ's followers are living stones. They have built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the priests are mediators between God and its members. Without the priests the Catholic Church is unthinkable. Here lies the gulf between our Evangelical Churches and the Catholic Churches. Nowhere in the apostolic communities do we find a specially chosen priesthood; you are all priests, say the apostles, because each one of you is a temple of God. The offerings which each has to offer for himself are the spiritual offerings of the heart, of obedience, of faith, of love.

Peter points out in his letter the difference between suffering because one is a criminal and suffering because one is a Christian, and urges his readers to overcome the hatred of their enemies by their upright lives, their good works. Christ is their example; he was reviled but reviled not again; he suffered, but threatened not; he gave his life for the sins of the world.

There Must be No Violent Retaliation. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." The fire of revenge may singe or even scorch my enemy, but it will do far more damage to the furniture of my own soul. After every indulgence in vengeful passion some previous personal possession has been destroyed. The fact of the matter is, this fire cannot be kept burning without making fuel of the priceless furnishings of the soul. "Heat not a furnace for your fire so hot that it do singe yourself."

There must be a serene commitment of the soul to the strong keeping of the Eternal God. "He committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." This is the way of peace, as this is the way of victory. If ever the enemy is to be conquered this must be the mode of the conquest.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

A Noble Self-Restraint. In the earlier sixties, Goldwin Smith found himself again and again the mark of the bitterest criticism from Disraeli. Later, Goldwin Smith, resigning his professorship at Oxford, came to Canada. At that time Disraeli's novel, Lothair, appeared, in which he attacked Smith—of course without using his name—as a social parasite. It stung Smith to the depths of his soul, but as he had not been mentioned by name there was nothing he could do but sit down and write this note personally to Disraeli:—

"You well know that if you had ventured openly to accuse me of any social baseness, you would have had to answer for your words; but when, sheltering yourself under the literary form of a work of fiction, you seek to traduce with impunity the social character of a political opponent, your expressions can touch no man's honor—they are the stingless insults of a coward."

That was all he did. And yet, at that very moment Goldwin Smith had in his possession letters of Disraeli with which he could have crushed him. Openly in Parliament Disraeli had said that he had never asked Peel for any position. But among Peel's papers which had been placed in Smith's hands, Smith had a letter in which Disraeli had abjectedly begged Peel to give him an office. All that Smith needed to do was to publish Disraeli's own letter to Peel, and it would have ruined Disraeli's career. But to Goldwin Smith that was not a noble thing to do.—Robert E. Speer, in The Stuff of Manhood.

There must be Justice but not Revenge. Many Christians have been sincere in their belief that the Allies, having beaten Germany, should have treated her as a friend and have been most lenient in the terms imposed upon her. Yet rooted in the belief of any one who thinks deeply, is the fact that sin and wrong must be punished. The wicked must suffer for their sins. Not in vindictiveness, not in the unreasoning spirit of vengeance, not with "the wildest war fury," as Von Hertling would have it, did the Allied Powers oppose their might against the military might of the Germans, and it was in no spirit of vengeance that they settled matters at the Peace Table. The Germans set the world on fire, and not only did the flame have to be put out but the perpetrators had to be shorn of their power to start another conflagration. Boundless transgressors as they were, they had to suffer the penalties. The Westminster Confession of Faith declares: "There is but one living and true God, who is most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty." Stern justice demands penalty for sin. As the Germans had sown, so they had to reap.

Abstain from Sins that War against the Soul. When the younger son was spending his substance in riotous living in the far country, he was "lost," Jesus says. It was his soul that was lost. He had no soul left, so to speak. A course of selfishness and sin had eaten it up and destroyed it. And that is always the result of a life of selfish and sensual pleasure. It dries up and destroys the soul. It empties a man of high feeling, noble aspiration and holy ambition. It de-humanizes him, it brutalizes him. It leaves him insensible to high appeal. It puts the mark of the beast on his very face. You remember that terrible sequence which Paul sets forth in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans—a "refusal to have God in their knowledge,".....".vile passions,".....a "reprobate mind": the repudiation of God; a life of sinful pleasure; a reprobate mind, a callous heart, a dead soul. And we see this tragic sequence in many a life. A course of selfish and sinful pleasure is the destruction of honor and truth and faith and fame.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

The Greater Guilt. Kriloff, a Russian author, has written a fable entitled, "The Robber and the Author." Both were condemned in hell to be placed in cauldrons under which fires were to be kindled. Under the robber there was placed a roaring fire which soon effected his destruction. The author, who had written books widely read, which contained the poisonous influences of immoral suggestions, had a lesser fate at first, for under him was placed a small, slow fire. But the longer it lasted, the larger it grew. The author protested at the unfairness.

Then one of the "furies" approached him and said: "Wretch, dost thou upbraid Providence? Dost thou compare thyself with the robber? His crime is as nothing compared with thine. Only as long as he lived did his cruelty and lawlessness render him hurtful. But thou!—long ago have thy bones crumbled to dust, yet the sun never rises without bringing to light fresh evils of which thou art the cause. The poison of thy vintage not only does not weaken, but

speeding ahead, it becomes more malignant as the years roll by. Look here," and for a moment he enabled him to look upon the world: "behold the cries, the misery, of which thou art the cause. Look at these children who have brought shame upon their families, who have reduced their parents to despair. By whom were their heads and hearts corrupted? By thee. Who strove to rend asunder the bands of society, ridiculing as childish follies all ideas of the sanctity of marriage and the right of authority and law, and rendering them responsible for all human misfortunes? Thou art the man! Didst thou not dignify unbelief with the name of enlightenment? Didst thou not place vice and passion in the most charming and alluring of lights? And now look!—a whole country, perverted by thy teaching, is being led by thee onward to ruin. Continue, then, to suffer, for here the measure of thy punishment shall be according to thy deserts."

Always Follow after that which is Good. We have given to the world the impression that the Christian is a man who holds correct views of Christian doctrine, and abstains from evil. He is a man who thinks this and that, and does not do this and the other. We did not mean to give such an impression. It is due to wrong emphasis. We have emphasized the negative rather than the positive, the right thinking rather than the right acting. In other words, we have taken the line of least resistance, and sent few away sorrowful about the greatness of our demands. We are known by what we *don't* believe or *don't* do, rather than by what we *do* believe, and *do*. Is what we don't do more impressive than what we do? "What do ye more than others?" comes the stinging question.

I was in an officers' mess some time ago, and they were discussing a new arrival. One of them said, "He is very quiet; he doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, and doesn't swear." "He must be religious," concluded another. That is it. That is the conception of a Christian that we have given them. If the new officer had been described as cheerful, generous, hospitable, and brave, they would not have concluded that he must be religious. Yet in which description is the man like Christ? How brave, cheerful, generous, and hospitable Christ was! He was the soul of chivalry. No virtue had been associated with the new officer that a swindler and criminal might not possess, yet he had at once been classified as Christian. But men possessing the cardinal Christian virtues of charity, humility, joy, generosity, hospitality, hope, courage, and self-sacrifice, are not classified as Christian, but merely as "good fellows." That is the tragedy of the Church.—Chaplain Thomas Tiplady, in The Cross at the Front.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The final impression one takes away from such a passage (verses 18-25) is of the overflowing fulness of the Christian message. A pin-point may start the opening through which bursts a revelation. The apostle starts this paragraph with a counsel to domestics on their behavior; he ends with these rich splendors of the evangel. It is often so. Our Lord asked the Woman of Samaria for a drink of water—the humblest boon: he ended by giving her the living water—the richest prize. St. Paul started to write of the duties of husbands and wives; in a moment he was in the heart of a great mystery concerning Christ and his Church.—Dr. J. M. E. Ross.

2. "I beseech you, as sojourners and pilgrims." The Christian looks for a life eternal. In comparison thereof the best things of this time are of little account. It is but as a lodging for a brief night, and at dawn the traveler sets forward for his true home. Hence the argument of the Apostolic entreaty. You have no long time to stay, and none to waste; your motto is ever, "Onward!"—Dr. Lumby.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are some of the things that love does, according to Paul? (1 Cor. 13.) 2. What are some of the things that love does not do, according to Paul? 3. Name some deeds John had witnessed which showed Jesus' love. 4. Repeat some of Jesus' words about love. 5. A father refused to have a necessary operation performed upon his child because, he said, he loved him too much to let him suffer: whom did he really love, the child or himself? 6. If a person has done wrong, if we love him shall we wish him to be punished? 7. If we love our enemies, why is it right for us to wish Germany to be punished? 8. Is punishment ever needed for the best welfare of an individual or a nation? 9. How have the Allies and the United States shown a spirit of love toward Germany?

JOHN WRITES ABOUT CHRISTIAN LOVE

Golden Text

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4.11

LESSON 1 John 4.7-21 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 13

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 John; 2 John; 3 John; 1 Corinthians 13

1 JOHN 4.7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: 13 hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. 16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. 17 Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. 21 And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

GOD is LOVE
GOD'S SON is GOD'S GIFT
We love because HE first loved us

I. LOVE IS THE VERY NATURE OF GOD'S BEING AND IS THE PROOF OF DIVINE SONSHIP, verses 7, 8. *Beloved,* wrote John the Beloved Disciple, *let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.* Love is not an attribute of God, but his very Being, and since love proceeds from God, we who are his sons must prove our sonship by our love. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.* This negative counterpart of verse 7 emphasizes the thought that "Love is the lens through which I discern the secret things of God."

II. GOD'S MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE, verses 9, 10. *Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.* The Incarnation is the manifestation of God's love. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life, Jn. 3.16. "Let me more assiduously think of God's

love. Let me sit down to it. In the National Gallery can be seen two sorts of people. There are the mere vagrants, who are always 'on the move,' passing from picture to picture, without seeing any. And there are the students, who sit down, and contemplate, and meditate, and appropriate, and saturate. And there are vagrants in respect to the love of the Lord. They have a passing glimpse, but the impression is not vital and vitalizing. And there are the students, who are always gazing, and who are continuously crying, 'O the depth of the riches of the love of God in Christ!'"(Jowett).

III. GOD'S LOVE THE GROUND FOR OUR LOVE, verse 11. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* God's love for us lays upon us the obligation of loving one another, for in this way we show our love for God.

IV. LOVE THE PROOF OF GOD'S SPIRIT IN US, verses 12-16. *No man hath beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abideth in us.* God's presence can not be seen, but it can be appreciated by its results: where love is seen in man, it proves the presence of God's Spirit within him. *And his love is perfected in us.* His love is completed in us, his abiding in us is the most complete expression of his love. *Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* The consciousness of actual fellowship between God and us we have through the Spirit which he has given us. Furthermore, we have another great proof of his love, which *we have beheld and bear witness,* (we who lived with him on earth have seen him with our eyes and to his life we can testify) in that *the Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God,* he lives in true fellowship with God. *And we* who saw him *know and have believed the love which God hath in us*—which God hath for us and shows in us. *God is love and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.* "There is only one Love, and our love, whatever it may be, is merely an infinitesmal expression of that love."

V. LOVE IN RELATION TO JUDGMENT, verses 17, 18. We may know that *love is made perfect with us,* when we can look forward with *boldness,* confidence, to the great *day of judgment, because as he is even so are we in this world.* "This is to be our aim: that the life of Christ in us shall be and do what the life of Christ was and did in himself. We are so to live that our life shall repeat the life of Jesus of Nazareth"(Alexander McKenzie).

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. "One result of love made perfect is absence of fear, confidence that both here and hereafter no real evil can overtake us. To be in God, to be as Christ is, must mean safety" (Hugh Black). *Because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.* To live in love is to be like Christ; to be like Christ is to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; where is there room for punishment or for the dread of it? "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

VI. THE WARRANT FOR LOVE, verse 19. *We love, because he first loved us.* The Authorized Version reads, "We love him, because he first loved us." The Revision gives us a still more precious truth—that we love at all is due to the primary activity of a divine love upon us. "Not only do we love God because he first has loved us, but all human love is reaction to the stimulus of the divine love. The whole sphere of Christ's affection is the response of that which is divine in us to the evoking love of the Father's heart."

VII. THE DUAL LOVE, verse 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.* "Which is the easier? At first glance it might seem as if the more difficult thing might be to love the unseen Father rather than the visible brother. Practically, however, this is not the case. We know each other so well! All our faults are so clearly revealed in the family life! It is often easier to love the distant person or object in the glow of the romance and the far-away glory. The severest test of love is when it is exercised upon the visible, imperfect and sometimes irritating brother at our side. If we cannot love him, let us not speak of loving the invisible Father, whose perfection and boundless grace is enough to win us to love's full exhibition. If we can love the somewhat unlovely brother, then indeed may we be sure that we can love the perfect Father who perfectly loves us."

VIII. THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE IS FROM THE FATHER,

verse 21. *And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.* "In that commandment speaks the very nature of the Father. What he bids us do is in accord with what he is. We see why he bids us love our brethren; it is because he fully loves us before ever the commandment is given. God asks us to do nothing which he has not done. Does one of our brethren seem ill suited to evoke our love? Yet God loves us; and were we worthy of his affection? Because he loves us in our sin, we surely can love our brethren. The law is logical. It springs from the heart of God."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

God is love, verse 8. This is a truth we have always known, but to the world of two thousand years ago it was a new thought. The pagan world had only gods who were envious of men's good fortune. One of their greatest men said: "It is nonsense to think that the gods love men." Just as unheard of was love for one's neighbor. It is true that the Scribes and Romans practised a certain kind of generosity toward the poor, but not out of pity, rather because "It is beautiful to give since it honors the giver and increases fame of his name, of his position, of his home, yes, of his city where he dwells."

Love, genuine, self-sacrificing love first entered the world with Christ and Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What chapter of that letter of Paul's is a Hymn of Love? What does it say that love is? That love does? What love does not do? What did Jesus call the greatest commandment? What commandment did he say was like unto it? What was Jesus' last command to Peter? How did John love Jesus? What parable did Jesus give that teaches the duty of showing love to one's neighbor?

John's Last Activities. Nothing is recorded in the New Testament about John's activity as an apostle after Christ's death, save that, as we have seen, he is associated with Peter in the events narrated in the early chapters of the Acts, and is mentioned by Paul as one of the three pillars of the church at the time of the Council in Jerusalem (Gal. 2.9). The three brief letters—1st, 2d, and 3d John—and the Book of Revelation are ascribed to him.

The First Epistle of John. At some time during the first decade of the second century, the Apostle John wrote his First Epistle. He wrote it, it is believed, to the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, and especially of Ephesus. All John's writings were written with a definite purpose. The purpose of his Gospel was to *quicken* faith, John 20.31. The purpose of his first Epistle was to *strengthen* faith: These things have I written unto you, that you may *know* that you have eternal life, 1 John 5.13. *Life, Light, Love,* are the great words of this letter.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"A man may have wonderful knowledge, which may unravel the mysteries of the Bible, and yet be as cold as an icicle," declared Dwight L. Moody. "He may glisten like the snow in the sun. Sometimes you have wondered why it was that certain ministers (teachers), who have such a marvelous command of language, and who preach (teach) with such mental strength, have not had more conversions. I believe, if the truth were known, you would find no Divine love back of their words, no pure love in their sermons (teaching)."

At another time Moody was talking about Henry Drummond and his words upon "The Greatest Thing in the World." "As you read what he terms the analysis of love," said Moody, "you find that all of its ingredients were woven into his daily life, making him one of the most lovable men I have ever known. Was it courtesy you looked for, he was a perfect gentleman. Was it kindness, he was always preferring another. Was it humility, he was simple and not currying favor. It has been said of him truthfully, as it was said of the early apostles, 'that men took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus.'" As Jesus was, even so may the teacher be in this world.

How shall we teach our pupils to love God? Phillips Brooks has well an-

swered the problem in these words:—"As Jesus approached the people whom he wished to save, did he say to them 'You must love God'? It was always a revelation. It was always, 'God loves you.' He went about saying that from house to house, from man to man. He said it to the Publican, the Magdalen, the Pharisee. He said it by his sermons, his miracles, and finally on the cross. He built this background behind every life. He spread this great sky over every soul, and then he looked to see the great compulsion, 'You must love God,' grasp every nature, not as a hard commandment, but as a warm necessity to which the nature yields as a cloud yields to the atmosphere and melts into the sky."

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: LOVING GOD AND OUR NEIGHBORS.

Lesson Material: Luke 10.25-27; 1 John 4.7-11.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What is love? You should have no difficulty in answering that question, because you have so many examples of love all around you. There's mother's love for baby, father's for his profession, your brother's for those engines of his. If you watch them and listen to them you will see what love means.

What is it to Love God and our Neighbors? *To put them first.* Does not mother seem to live for her child? Don't you say sometimes to your brother, "You are all wrapped up in those motors of yours. You can't think or talk about anything else"? That was the way with the Apostle Paul. "I only know one thing," he said, "and that is Jesus and him crucified." He did not want to think or talk of anything else. Why? Because he loved Jesus. So to love God and our neighbors is to put them first in our mind and heart, to think of them first and think of them always.

To desire to please them. Love never dreams of being anything else than obliging, whatever the cost. Is not mother always trying to please her child and to give him what he wants if it is best for him to have it? So to love God and our neighbor is to be anxious to please and oblige them.

To be considerate towards them. To be considerate is to be thoughtful, careful. Love spends time in thinking about the needs of those he loves and is very careful not to hurt their feelings. "You never stopped to consider," says some one. "You acted without thinking and the result is all this trouble." Love is not like that. It considers the loved one and never acts without thinking first of how the action will affect him. So to love God and one's neighbor is to consider them in everything one says and does.

To be constrained. What does that mean? It is to feel compelled and driven on to action. "The love of God constraineth me," said Paul. And his love did just that; it would not let him rest, but drew him on to serve Christ. That Samaritan went to the help of the wounded man because he could not help it. His love for suffering people compelled him to help them. The martyrs went to prison and scaffold and stake rather than be false to Christ. And it was love for him that made them. The soldier crawled out into "No Man's Land" to bring in a wounded chum. And it was love that sent him on that perilous errand. To love God and one's neighbor is to serve them. Love is practical. It is not satisfied in speaking—it acts. You do not love God and your neighbor if you never do anything for them.

The First and Best Why of Love. "A little girl was playing with her doll in a room where her mother was busily engaged in some literary work. When she had finished her writing, she said, 'You can come now, Alice, I have done all I want to do this morning.' The child ran to her mother, exclaiming, 'I am so glad, for I wanted to love you so much.' 'But I thought you were very happy with dolly.' 'Yes, mother, I was, but I soon get tired of loving her, for she cannot love me back.' 'And is that why you love me—because I can love back?' 'That is one why, but not the first or best why.' 'What is the first and best why?' 'Because you loved me when I was too little to love you back.' Mother's eyes filled with tears as she whispered—'We love him because he first loved us.'"

Try Love. Once there was a barn door that was very hard to move. It was one of those old-fashioned doors we used to see in the country. It slid along on a track, and sometimes it was almost impossible to open it. At last it stuck fast and no one could move it. So they sent for a carpenter. He took it off and

put some oil on it, and then it moved so easily that you could have pushed it open with your little finger. It needed oil, that was all.

There are many things in life that are like that barn door. They are hard. We need something to make them go, and I am going to tell you this morning what will always make hard things easy. It is love.

There are some people whom we find it very hard to get along with. They are like that old barn door we were talking about. The more we do for them the worse they are. The trouble is, they need a little love. Love them a little, and show them that you love them, and you will be surprised to see how much easier it will be to get along with them.

An automobile stopped on our street the other day, and they could not make it go. The engine was all right, but something had been forgotten. They had put in no cylinder oil.

Sometimes there is trouble in the house, or in school, or out on the playground, and when we come to look, we find we have forgotten to put the love in; and things won't run very long without love, any more than a car will run without oil.—Condensed from From the Children's Hour, by Dr. Stuart Nye Hutchison.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Matthew 22.37-39. Or, Luke 10.27.

"Grant that we may love each other,
Mindful of thy holy word,—
He that loveth not his brother
Surely cannot love the Lord."

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was John when he had his wonderful vision? 2. Why was he there? 3. What day of the week was it? 4. Why were there seven candlesticks? 5. Who was in the midst of them? 6. When John saw Jesus, how did he feel? 7. What did he do? 8. What did Jesus say to him?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: LOVE FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

Additional Material: 1 John 3.13-18.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Tradition has a beautiful picture of the Apostle John in his last days, when he was too old and frail to preach being carried daily to the market place of Ephesus and saying simply to those who gathered to hear his words, "My little children, love one another, for love is of God." When some one ventured to ask why he did not tell them something else, he replied, "Because this is the sum and substance of the gospel; when this is done all is done."

What is the first thing which John says about love in our lesson from his First Epistle?

John's Lessons about Christian Love. The apostle appeals to his readers to love. Two reasons he gives: first and foremost, the nature of God is love, and therefore those who are his children, begotten of him, should love. One who does not love, does not know God; for God is love: The second reason is that God has manifested his love: he gave the greatest Gift he could to man, he sent his only begotten Son into the world that men might live through him. What a love was that! The gift of his Son as the propitiation for our sins! "Beloved," the apostle continues his appeal, "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." No one has ever seen God but as he was revealed in Christ, so his love is also revealed in those who are his children. We who love one another have God's Spirit dwelling in us, and bear witness to the Savior. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. The perfect love that knows no fear is the true revelation of God. We love, because he first loved us. Sternly then the Apostle denounces those as liars who claim to love God but have no love for their brothers. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. He who loves God is bidden by God to love his brother also.

We Love because He first Loved us. Jesus has made it possible for every one to love God, for he has taught us that God himself is love, that we may think of him as a Father; and he has shown in his own life what God must be, a Divine Being who loves and cares for every one. It is with many as with the little boy who thought the minister was too great a man to notice him, and

was so afraid of him that when he saw the minister coming in the distance he would go in the opposite direction so as not to meet him. The minister made an effort to get acquainted with that lad, and the two became great friends. One day the minister said, "Tell me, George, do you love me?" Eagerly the boy answered, "Yes, indeed I do." "But, George, there was a time when you did not, when you would run away from me. How long is it since you have loved me?" The boy thought awhile and then said, "Ever since I knew that you loved me." As long as we fear God as a great and terrible Being we do not love him; it is only when we realize that he loves us that our hearts go out in love to him. We love, because he first loved us. Perfect love casteth out fear.

If we Love God and One Another, Let us Show it. An observer of the British methods of training horses for use in the army noticed that at the close of each day's drill there came, following the order to dismount, another order that is without parallel in any other army. It seemed to be a single mysterious word, "Muchyerosses!" Its meaning was made clear, however, when each rider proceeded to stroke, pat or pet his charger, perfunctorily or affectionately, as the case might be. The command meant, "Make much of your horses."

Should we not make much of others? Do we? Are we sometimes slow in letting others know that we love them? If every loving thought we have blossomed into a loving deed, what a different world would this be! We can make ourselves put into words the kind thoughts we have of others, we can make ourselves do the helpful deeds to which our loving thoughts prompt us. Every word spoken and every deed done makes it easier and more natural for other words and deeds to follow. Let us make much of others.

"Dear heart, be swift in loving—
Time speedeth on;
And so thy chance of blessed service
Will soon be gone."

If ye Love Me, ye will Keep My Commandments. Obedience to Christ's commands is the proof of love for Christ. Love for Christ is not mere emotion. It does not merely reside in the heart. It is the set of the will. It lives in deeds, not words. It is a very practical thing. To love is to obey. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "When we obey because we love him who speaks to us, then our obedience is glorious. It is no longer 'I must,' but 'I wish to,' that leads us to act. We do his will because we cannot help it."

Love is Shown by Service. It is an interesting fact that our words *duty* and *debt* come—through two different French words—from the same Latin word, *debere*, to owe. *Debere* is composed of *de* and *habere*, to have on loan. The love which we have from God on loan, is a debt, a duty, we owe to our brothers. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another, says John. This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, says Jesus.

"Say not, 'I love the Lord,' unless you find
Within you, welling up by day and night,
A love, strong, full and deep, for all mankind."

The love which Jesus and John speak of is not a vague, mystical feeling, but a real, practical force in our everyday conduct, a controlling principle, that will not only prevent our doing evil to our brothers but will cause us to seek their welfare instead of our own. Love is shown by service.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Courtesy is love in trifles.

Love one another in spite of your faults; do what you can to serve each other, to lighten each other's trials and inconveniences and burdens; above all, make the best of one another.—Dean Stanley.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: the love of the Lord is its crown and climax.—Hugh Black.

Measure your love, not by the way it makes you feel, but by the thing it makes you willing to do.—C. B. McAfee.

He who loves his fellow-man
Is loving God the holiest way he can.—Alice Cary.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why is the last book of the Bible called *Revelation?* 2. Who wrote it? 3. To whom was

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it written? 4. What was the duty of the priests and why are we called "priests unto God"? 5. Why are candlesticks a fitting symbol for the churches? 6. When Stephen gazed stedfastly into heaven, what did he see? (Acts 7.55.) 7. Who was the center of John's vision? 8. What did his robe signify? 9. His girdle? 10. The whiteness of his hair? 11. His flaming eyes? 12. His glowing feet? 13. His voice? 14. The stars in his hand? 15. The sword in his mouth? 16. Why did John picture Christ in this symbolic way? 17. What effect had the vision on John? 18. What had Jesus told his disciples in Mt. 18.20?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: CHRISTIAN LOVE REGENERATING SOCIETY Or, THE GROUND AND OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What books of the New Testament are ascribed to the Apostle John? To whom and when did he write his First Epistle? What was his purpose in writing it? What are the three great words of this Epistle?

John Writes about Christian Love. See the Lesson Text Explained and Illumined, and John's Lessons about Christian Love, page 126.

God is Love. I remember a day not long ago when my little girl broke her doll. It was a dark and awful event, for she had only a little girl's strength wherewithal to endure it. And I saw my little girl rush to the sweet surgeon of all dolls' hearts and climb to her mother's knee and pillow her face in the slope of a woman's shoulder that God made for the face of a child. I expected that she would stammer out her trouble; but instead she cried bitterly for a moment, and then looked up with the radiance of trust shining through her tears and said, "Mamma, you love me, don't you?" And when her mother replied, "Yes, my dear, of course I love you," the child asked her to mend the doll. I learned more theology in that moment than I have ever learned from books, and I said with my soul, "Ah me, I come back to God again and again, and I stammer out the story of my blundering, and I ask him to fix it, to make it right, when, after all, the thing I want to ascertain is that he loves me, for if he does, he will make it right." That which father is to the little child, God is to us, and the great, good, near Father loves us with an everlasting love.—Dr. Ozora S. Davis.

This Commandment Have we from Him, that He who Loveth God Love his Brother also. Most religions are meant to be straight lines, connecting two points: God and man. But Christianity has three points: God and man and his brother, with two lines that make a right angle. Each one of us is at the point of the angle, looking up to God and out to our brother. What God sends down on the perpendicular line we must pass on along the horizontal. If one hand goes up to God, the other must go out to our brother.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Love the Guiding Principle of Life. Whichever way the boat is going the compass always says "That's north." The human soul needs something which will always point one way and say unerringly, "That's right." "There is such a thing," says Paul. "It is having the spirit of love in your heart."

You cannot provide against every chance and hap of life. The actor may rehearse his part and decide where he must whisper, where he must weep, and where he must cry aloud. He may get it off perfectly, and after a few trials with his audience he knows how far he has succeeded or failed. You cannot settle life up like that. So many events are unforeseen. They come round the corner unexpectedly. You must give your answer then and there, and take the eternal consequences. You must do your deed in a moment, and stand by it for ever. You cannot rehearse life. Sometimes after a mistake you say, "I shall know better next time," but the next time never comes, or comes in a different dress.

You need a principle, a disposition, a character, always equipped and ready. You want an unerring instinct that will never play you false or leave you in the lurch, a soul of such a make that you can say to it anywhere and any time, "Soul, what is right?" and it will answer, "That."

That is the need, and this is the supply—a spirit of love. "Love never faileth." —W. J. Farrow.

Try Love. If your lot seems hard in its relations to your fellows, try love. You have growled, or murmured, or criticised or pouted long enough. You reaped only what you sowed. The bitter herb in your own soul's garden did

not make a sweet shrub for your nostril, nor a pretty bloom for your eye when you planted a slip from the noxious weed in another's heart. Try love!

In your home you find fault. You have nagged until your own temper and the temper of your family have become frayed into fringes by the gusts of your tongue. Or, you have settled down into the cold, matter-of-fact style of living. Your wife simply boards and lodges you, and attends to your laundry. Your husband merely pays your bills and gives you a shelter. Your children go their own ways without reverence for parents. It is only a tolerated existence. Try love! Do not let the wife cease to be a sweetheart, or the husband a lover, or children God's sweetest gifts to your soul. Try love. Let nagging and indifference die.

Your friendships seem artificial. You have wondered what they are worth to you. Begin now to wonder what you are worth to them. Seek to make no corner on happiness, but love others into their joys. See if they will not love you because you love them.

Your business seems stale. Every morning you wake up and face that terrible monotony. You feel chained to a treadmill. You have been envious of the man in some other calling—and he has, perhaps, been acting just as you have. Have you tried to love your business? Has it been anything more to you than a scheme to make money? Even business will not bless you unless you love it.

You have trouble with your employes, or you hate your employer. You live on the edge of strikes or lockouts. You pay as little wages as possible to your men under the false theory that labor is a commodity, like asphalt for a pavement, and has no soul. You do as little work and as much loafing as possible, and your work is seamy. There is no conscience in what your hands perform: You feel that the very order of society hangs round your future as a stone about the neck of a swimmer. Try love! Love your employes. And, workmen, love your employers. Political economy may laugh at my words, "Try love," and despair may hoot at them, but as sure as there is such a thing as a human heart that is the only solution for our chaos. Here is where humanity, Christianity and all the aspirations of Socialism become tangent.—Dr. W. E. Bitting, in The Examiner.

Will Christian Love Regenerate Business? Perfect love casteth out fear. Fear is the source of the industrial difficulties of today. If you have ever made a point of questioning both sides impartially, seeking to see the point of view of both, you must have been struck with the distrust amounting almost to fear of both contracting parties. Masters and men do not trust each other; they fear each other, ever thinking that each side is ready to take advantage. And so we have the dislocation of trade, which is only the evidence of a prior dislocation of true human relationship. Men must learn that they cannot do even the world's business without God. Perfect love casteth out fear. Is it Utopian to think that this may be true of us in our business relations with each other? Is it the thought of a dreamer to imagine that yet the love of God will so grip men's hearts that the love of men will be a natural motive of all our actions? Is it too much to expect for our society that fear may no longer have dominion over us; because self is no longer the ruling passion?—Hugh Black, in Christ's Service of Love.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The love of God. See the third chapter of The Transfigured Church, by Dr. Jowett.

2. The love of man. See Where Love Is There Is God Also, Vol. XIV of Scribner's Edition of Tolstoi.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of the word *Revelation?* 2. *Apocalypse?* 3. What is the nature of an apocalypse? 4. Can Revelation be interpreted literally? 5. What was the purpose of the book? 6. What is the meaning of "in the Spirit," verse 10? 7. Why are seven spirits spoken of in verse 4? 8. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 18? 9. What is the meaning of the vision of Christ? 10. Was Jesus often angry? 11. Was he ever angry on personal grounds? 12. What things aroused his anger? 13. Name some of the occasions on which his eyes must have been as a flame of fire. 14. Recall some of his words when symbolically there proceeded out of his mouth a sharp two-edged sword.

JOHN ON THE ISLE OF PATMOS

Golden Text

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever. Hebrews 13.8

LESSON Revelation 1 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 6.1-8

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS John 21.20-25; Revelation 2. 1-3.22

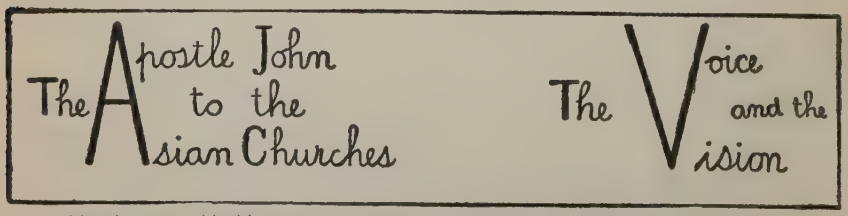
REVELATION 1.4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



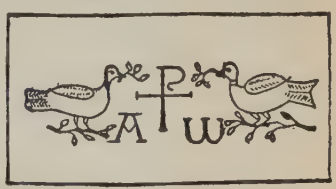
I. THE SALUTATION TO THE CHURCHES, verses 4-8. *John to the seven churches that are in Asia:* this was the customary form for the beginning of a letter. By *Asia* is meant, not the continent of Asia nor the peninsula of Asia Minor, but the Roman province of that name in that peninsula. The whole Book of Revelation was written primarily for those churches, with which John was personally acquainted, Rev. 22.16. *Seven* is a number that represented *com-*

pleteness, and therefore means *all. Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come,* from the Eternal God. There is evidently here a direct allusion to Ex. 3.14, where Jehovah reveals himself as the great I AM, the Self-Existent and Eternal One. *And from the seven Spirits that are before his throne.* Again the number *seven:* the Holy Spirit in his perfection: compare Rev. 4.5; 5.6. *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness.* Compare 1.2 and 3.14; and Jesus' words, "I bear witness to the truth," Jn. 18.37. *The firstborn of the dead.* The first of the dead to "enter life": compare Col. 1.18. *And the ruler of the kings of the earth.* A paraphrase of the language of the 89th Psalm.

Unto him that loveth us. Christ's love is continuous. "Perhaps John first wrote 'loved' and then bethought him, 'Why should I say, "loved" when he loves us still?'" *And loosed us from our sins by his blood.* Delivered us from sin by the shedding of his blood. *And he made us to be a kingdom.* Christ's followers not only inherit a Kingdom, but they *are* a Kingdom, a society under his Kingship. "He 'loosed' and then he ennobled. After emancipation there came enfranchisement" (Jowett). *To be priests unto his God and Father.* See Ex. 19.6. In former times other men had been priests, or mediators, between God and men; now such are no longer needed, for each one has direct access to God. "A priest is one who has a well-trodden way to God, and who treads it in the interest of his brother" (Jowett). *To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever,* unto the ages of the ages. Compare Rom. 16.27; 2 Tim. 4. 18; Heb. 13.21; 1 Pet. 4.11.

Behold, he cometh with the clouds. Compare Dan. 7.13: Mt. 24.30; 26.64; Mk. 14.62; and ¶ 7, p. 133. *Every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.* Compare Zech. 12.10; Jn. 19.37. "There will be two kinds of mourning, the one due to the terror of an enemy, the other to the terror of the penitent" (Bengel).

I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God. Alpha (A) is the first letter and Omega (Ω) is the last letter of the Greek Alphabet. It is as if it read "I am the A and the Z," and the expression means, I am the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the Eternal One. Compare Rev. 21.6; Isa. 44.6. The same statement is used in verse 17 to describe Christ. *The Almighty.* The Supreme Ruler.



A Design from the Catacombs with the Letters Alpha and Omega

II. THE VOICE, verses 9-11. *I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience* (endurance), *which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos.* See page 133. *For the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.* He was an exile because he proclaimed the word of God and bore witness to Jesus the Christ.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. He was meditating upon Christ and divine things: his mind was open and receptive for divine messages. *The Lord's Day* was the first of the week, so called in memory of Christ's resurrection. "He was 'in the Spirit,' the life of sense suspended, heaven opened before the eye of faith." *And I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying.* Compare Ezek. 3.12: "Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great rushing, saying." *What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches.*

III. THE VISION, verses 12-16. Turning to *see the voice that spake with me, I saw seven golden candlesticks.* The seven-branched candlestick in the temple suggested the figure for the seven churches, verse 20. A church was a center of light, a bearer of light, not the source of light, for *in the midst of the candlesticks was one like unto a son of man.* In the Gospels Christ uses this phrase, son of man, eighty-three times for himself. *Clothed with a garment down to the foot:* such was the robe of the priest. *And girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle:* compare Dan. 10.5. *And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow:* compare Dan. 7.9. *And his eyes were as a flame of fire:* compare Dan. 7.9; 10.6. *And his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace:* compare Ezek. 1.7; Dan. 10.6. *And his voice as the voice of many waters.* Compare Ezek. 1.24; 43.2.

And he had in his right hand seven stars—the angels of the seven churches,

verse 20; Rev. 2.1; 3.1. *And out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword.* "There is today an impoverished conception of God. The popular God is not great. Have we not robbed the Almighty of much of his awful glory, and to what extent are we not ourselves despoiled? We have rejoiced in the Fatherhood of our God, but too frequently the Fatherhood we have proclaimed has been throneless and effeminate. *Seven stars*—yes, we can accept that delicate suggestion of encircling love and care! *And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength*:—yes, we can bask in the distributed splendor of that sunny morn! *And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword!*—and is that, too, in our selection, or has our cherished image been deprived of the

The Seven-Branched Candlestick of Herod's Temple. From the Arch of Titus, Rome

sword? Does its absence make us more thoughtful and braver, or does it tend to lull us into an easefulness which removes us far away from the man who, when he saw him 'fell at his feet as dead'?" (Jowett).

IV. THE VOICE INTERPRETING THE VISION, verses 17-20. *And when I saw him I fell at his feet as one dead.* Compare the effect of their visions upon Daniel and Ezekiel, Dan. 8.17; 10.9; Ezek. 1.28. *And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not.* Compare Jesus' words in Mt. 17.6, 7. *I am the first and the last:* the same words which in verse 8 are applied to God. *The Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.* "Let me take these simple words, and quietly gaze into the wonderful depths of their fathomless simplicity. An old villager used to tell me it would strengthen my eyes if I looked long into deep wells. And it will assuredly strengthen the eyes of my soul to gaze into wells like these. I AM THE LIVING ONE. What a marvellous transformation it worked upon Dr. Dale, when one day, in his study, it flashed upon him, as never before, that Jesus Christ is alive! 'Christ is alive!' he repeated again and again, until the clarion music filled all the rooms in his soul. 'Christ is alive!' *And I was dead. And, behold, I am alive for ever more.* 'Jesus has conquered death and all its powers.' Never more will it sit on a transient throne. Its power is broken, its 'sting' has lost its poison, there isn't a boast left in its apparently omnivorous mouth! 'Where's thy victory, O grave?' And here is the gospel for me—'Because I live ye shall live also.'" (Jowett). *And I have the keys of death and of Hades.* Compare Mt. 16.19; Jn. 5.28. By *Hades* is understood the world of the dead, and no distinction is to be made between it and *death.* It is because he died that he holds the keys of

death. "Can we not understand that?" questions Phillips Brooks. "Do we not know how any soul that has passed through a great experience holds the keys of that experience, so that as he sees another coming up to it just as ignorantly and fearfully as he came, he can run up to this newcomer and open the door for him, show him on what side this experience is best entered, lead him through the dark passages of it where he could not easily find the way alone, and at last bring him out into the splendor of the light beyond? And this is just exactly what Jesus does for us by his resurrection. Having the keys of death and hell, he comes to us as we are drawing near this door, and he opens the doors on both sides of it, and lets us look through it, and shows us immortality. Not merely *he* lives forever, but so shall *we*. Because he lives, we shall live also."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, verse 16. Dr. Jefferson reminds us that we Americans do not know the sun. Sometimes in July and August we think we are quite well acquainted with him, but we know him only a little. We must go to the Orient to find what a cloudless sky is, and to feel the power of the sun shining in his strength. We must go down into the Jordan Valley to truly realize his power. When the Oriental sun shines in his strength, to gaze upon him is impossible. His glory immediately strikes the eye blind. John aptly symbolized Christ's glory by this strongest possible symbol, the sun shining in his strength.

I am alive for evermore, verse 18. In the face of those oriental systems which threatened men with endless deaths, transmigrations, and metamorphoses, systems which modern paganism seeks to revive, Christianity holds that the faithful pass through one eclipse only into personal, conscious, immortal life.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What books of the Bible are ascribed to the Apostle John? When John speaks of Asia to what does he refer? When had Jesus said to his disciples, "Fear not"? What is said about Jesus' face at the Transfiguration?

John's Last Years. An early tradition gives Ephesus as the scene of the Apostle's last years of activities, and affirms that he was banished to the Island of Patmos by the Emperor Nero (according to Irenæus, by the Emperor Domitian) and that upon receiving his freedom he returned to Ephesus, where he died. Jerome dates his death 68 years after the death of Christ.

In our text from the Book of Revelation, we read that he was on "the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus." He was a partaker with the Churches in tribulation. Professor Ramsay believes that the milder forms of exile were reserved for the Roman citizens and persons of rank, and that John's penalty was hard labor of some kind, probably in the mines under the lash of military overseers, preceded by severe beating and accompanied by perpetual fetters, scant clothing, insufficient food, and that he slept on the bare ground or in a dark prison. It was during this time that he had his wonderful vision which we study today.

The Nature of the Book of Revelation. Revelation is classed as a prophetical book, the only one in the New Testament. In the first verse, John calls it an apocalypse (Revelation comes from the Latin translation of this Greek word), but after that he refers to it as a prophecy. It is a prophecy written in the particular literary form known as apocalypse. We must not forget that prophecy in the Bible is not wholly nor mainly prediction, a foretelling of future events. Prophecy tells us what God said to the prophets. Apocalypse tells us what God showed to the prophets. The Book of Revelation is symbolical, and cannot be interpreted literally.

The Book is Symbolic, not Pictorial. In the words of Dr. Charles E. Jefferson: "There are no pictures in it for the eye. We have difficulty in reading the Book, because we stumble constantly. We persist in making the book a book of pictures. But it is not a picture book. It is a book of symbols. Symbols are for the reason, not for the eye. An algebra, for instance, has no pictures in it. Many a pupil has wished it had. It has things in it which look like this:

The Abolition of Fear. "Fear not," said this glorious Christ to John. The vision of this Christ is the real antidote to fear; to fear about life and its difficulties, for he is the Living One and will be always with us; to fear about death, for he has the "keys" and is death's Lord; to fear about the future of the world, for he is the Ruler of the kings of the earth.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Revelation 5.13.

"Lord, thy glory fills the heaven,
Earth is with its fulness stored;
Unto thee be glory given,
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord!"

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus say about Heaven in Jn. 14.2? 2. How many people did John see in Heaven? 3. Where were they from? 4. Whom did they worship? 5. What did he say there would not be in Heaven? 6. Who would be the Shepherd?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: A VISION OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST Or, A MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANS IN PERIL

Additional Material: Rev. 4.1 to 5.14.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In the United States Mint at Philadelphia there is a coin which is at least 2,000 years old. It came from the ancient city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor. It was to that city of Philadelphia and to six other cities of the province of Asia, in Asia Minor, that John addressed the book which we call Revelation. Why?

The Face of the Christ. Two thousand years ago, he came, conquering and to conquer. Think first of his ambitious humility, his kingly and imperial modesty. Go to the British Museum and count the statues of Rameses, how many they are and in how hard a stone. See how every Roman Emperor has his bust. Note the faces of monarchs on coin and postage stamps. Trace the cipher of Louis XIV. on window and portal of his chapel at Versailles. How familiar are the features of Napoleon. But the countenance of Christ rose above this world, unrecorded by any sculptor or painter. Yet who, of all rulers of men, was as ambitious as he? The potentates of history built cities and destroyed them, changed the names of provinces and lorded it over the map. He claimed the hearts of men. And because he was of no reputation among the classic artists of his day, whose dim frescoes still adorn what is left of pleasure places, like Pompeii, long desolate, he has since been highly exalted. The reverent brush of supremest genius has labored to reveal the glorious lineaments of the Son of Man. His countenance, faint or clear, is known, as if by instinct, to us all. The crude coloring of the Armenian altarpiece is one with the glowing splendors of Holman Hunt or Rubens, and no artist, whether of the brush, the chisel, the pen, or of daily life, can honestly endeavor to show him forth without rising nobler from the effort.—Condensed from The Christ We Forget, by P. W. Wilson.

John's Vision of the Glorified Christ. The central figure in John's vision was the figure of the Son of Man, glorified as once John had seen him on the Mount of Transfiguration, when "his face did shine as the sun." *I saw seven golden candlesticks,* John says: these stood for the seven churches to which he was writing, and as seven was the complete number, they stood for all churches. *And in the midst of the candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man clothed in a garment down to his feet.* This figure of the glorified Christ was seen arrayed, not as in the days of his ministry, in the short seamless tunic of a Galilean peasant, but in the long garb of a High Priest which symbolized to a Jew the highest authority on earth. Like the High Priest in Old Testament times, Christ is the mediator between God and man; his is the highest position of authority and power. *He was girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle.* A golden girdle was worn by kings. Christ is not only High Priest but King of Kings. The girdle was worn, not about the waist, but about the breast, as the High Priest wore it when on duty: Christ is in active service. *His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow:* that is, they were absolutely white. Christ is old, as old as Eternity, he is from everlasting to everlasting. White is also the symbol of righteousness and wisdom. Christ is the only perfect Man. *His eyes were as a flame of fire.* Christ is omniscient (allknowing),

his eyes penetrate conscience, he knows what is in man. *His feet were like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace.* Here we are told of the omnipotence (all-powerfulness) of Christ. "His feet are hard and hot; they trample down all opposition; they scorch and shrivel into nothingness all obstacles and bars"—*His voice was as the voice of many waters.* "The world is filled with the reverberations of what he says." *He had in his right hand seven stars.* The seven stars were the Seven Churches, and since seven stands for completeness the symbolism means that he holds all the churches of the world in his care. *Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword.* His message is two-edged, it cuts in every direction, no one may escape from its keenness. *His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.*

When John the Apostle was with Christ as he walked and talked in Galilee and Judea, he did not *fall at his feet as one dead.* He had not been so overpowered by the presence of Christ. But John the exile on Patmos when he beheld Christ in the full splendor of his authority and power, as the ever-living Christ working in history, fell amazed and speechless before him. But Christ did not wish John to lie powerless before him. He bade him rise, and inspired him with the courage and hope as he said, as he had said to him on the Sea of Galilee, "Fear not." "I am the first and the last," he continued, "and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

The Proof of a Living Christ. The editor of one of our leading religious journals was walking along some cliffs near the sea one Easter morning. In his walk he encountered an old fisherman, and during their conversation together the editor was struck by the simple faith of the old fisherman in his Risen Savior. "How do you know that Christ is risen?" he asked. "Sir," came the reply, "do you see those cottages near the cliffs? Well, sir, sometimes when I'm far away out at sea I know that the sun is risen by the light that is reflected from yon cottage windows. How do I know that Christ is risen? Why, sir, do I not see his light reflected from the faces of some of my fellows every day, and do I not feel the light of his glory in my own life? As soon tell me that the sun is not risen when I see his reflected glory, as tell me that my Lord is not risen."—Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

O thou, without beginning, without end,
Let us all begin and end in thee.—Goldsmith.

Jesus Christ is the illumination and the inspiration of existence: without him the world is a puzzle, and death a horror, and eternity a blank.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. From what race do the redeemed in Heaven come? 2. What do we mean by the expression, "You're a white man"? 3. Why are the redeemed in Heaven said to wear white robes? 4. Of what are palm-branches symbolical? 5. What is the occupation of the redeemed? 6. What does the last clause of verse 15 mean? 7. What will be absent in Heaven?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE GLORIFIED CHRIST THE CENTER OF REVELATION

The Conception of Jesus Christ during the Middle Ages. The student of church history has many surprises, and one of them is the subordinate position which has been given to Jesus Christ through extended periods of Christian history. Through large parts of the Christian world, during what we call the middle ages, the Virgin Mary held the supreme place in the popular mind. Most of the prayers were offered to her. To her went out the richest love of the heart. Jesus was hidden behind his mother, and sometimes lost to view completely amid the vast company of the saints. The story told of an experience in the life of Martin Luther when he was a young man, throws a flood of light upon the mental habits of the early sixteenth century. Luther had been brought up in a pious home. Both of his parents were devout. When young Luther, overtaken by a thunder-storm in a field, saw his companion struck down by lightning, he fell upon his knees crying in consternation: "Help, Saint Anna! I'll be a monk." He did not think of crying to Jesus. He cried to Jesus' grandmother.

The Abolition of Fear. "Fear not," said this glorious Christ to John. The vision of this Christ is the real antidote to fear; to fear about life and its difficulties, for he is the Living One and will be always with us; to fear about death, for he has the "keys" and is death's Lord; to fear about the future of the world, for he is the Ruler of the kings of the earth.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Revelation 5.13.

"Lord, thy glory fills the heaven,
Earth is with its fulness stored;
Unto thee be glory given,
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord!"

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus say about Heaven in Jn. 14.2? 2. How many people did John see in Heaven? 3. Where were they from? 4. Whom did they worship? 5. What did he say there would not be in Heaven? 6. Who would be the Shepherd?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: A VISION OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST Or, A MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANS IN PERIL

Additional Material: Rev. 4.1 to 5.14.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In the United States Mint at Philadelphia there is a coin which is at least 2,000 years old. It came from the ancient city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor. It was to that city of Philadelphia and to six other cities of the province of Asia, in Asia Minor, that John addressed the book which we call Revelation. Why?

The Face of the Christ. Two thousand years ago, he came, conquering and to conquer. Think first of his ambitious humility, his kingly and imperial modesty. Go to the British Museum and count the statues of Rameses, how many they are and in how hard a stone. See how every Roman Emperor has his bust. Note the faces of monarchs on coin and postage stamps. Trace the cipher of Louis XIV. on window and portal of his chapel at Versailles. How familiar are the features of Napoleon. But the countenance of Christ rose above this world, unrecorded by any sculptor or painter. Yet who, of all rulers of men, was as ambitious as he? The potentates of history built cities and destroyed them, changed the names of provinces and lorded it over the map. He claimed the hearts of men. And because he was of no reputation among the classic artists of his day, whose dim frescoes still adorn what is left of pleasure places, like Pompeii, long desolate, he has since been highly exalted. The reverent brush of supremest genius has labored to reveal the glorious lineaments of the Son of Man. His countenance, faint or clear, is known, as if by instinct, to us all. The crude coloring of the Armenian altarpiece is one with the glowing splendors of Holman Hunt or Rubens, and no artist, whether of the brush, the chisel, the pen, or of daily life, can honestly endeavor to show him forth without rising nobler from the effort.—Condensed from The Christ We Forget, by P. W. Wilson.

John's Vision of the Glorified Christ. The central figure in John's vision was the figure of the Son of Man, glorified as once John had seen him on the Mount of Transfiguration, when "his face did shine as the sun." *I saw seven golden candlesticks,* John says: these stood for the seven churches to which he was writing, and as seven was the complete number, they stood for all churches. *And in the midst of the candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man clothed in a garment down to his feet.* This figure of the glorified Christ was seen arrayed, not as in the days of his ministry, in the short seamless tunic of a Galilean peasant, but in the long garb of a High Priest which symbolized to a Jew the highest authority on earth. Like the High Priest in Old Testament times, Christ is the mediator between God and man; his is the highest position of authority and power. *He was girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle.* A golden girdle was worn by kings. Christ is not only High Priest but King of Kings. The girdle was worn, not about the waist, but about the breast, as the High Priest wore it when on duty: Christ is in active service. *His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow:* that is, they were absolutely white. Christ is old, as old as Eternity, he is from everlasting to everlasting. White is also the symbol of righteousness and wisdom. Christ is the only perfect Man. *His eyes were as a flame of fire.* Christ is omniscient (allknowing),

his eyes penetrate conscience, he knows what is in man. *His feet were like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace.* Here we are told of the omnipotence (all-powerfulness) of Christ. "His feet are hard and hot; they trample down all opposition; they scorch and shrivel into nothingness all obstacles and bars"—*His voice was as the voice of many waters.* "The world is filled with the reverberations of what he says." *He had in his right hand seven stars.* The seven stars were the Seven Churches, and since seven stands for completeness the symbolism means that he holds all the churches of the world in his care. *Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword.* His message is two-edged, it cuts in every direction, no one may escape from its keenness. *His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.*

When John the Apostle was with Christ as he walked and talked in Galilee and Judea, he did not *fall at his feet as one dead.* He had not been so overpowered by the presence of Christ. But John the exile on Patmos when he beheld Christ in the full splendor of his authority and power, as the ever-living Christ working in history, fell amazed and speechless before him. But Christ did not wish John to lie powerless before him. He bade him rise, and inspired him with the courage and hope as he said, as he had said to him on the Sea of Galilee, "Fear not." "I am the first and the last," he continued, "and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

The Proof of a Living Christ. The editor of one of our leading religious journals was walking along some cliffs near the sea one Easter morning. In his walk he encountered an old fisherman, and during their conversation together the editor was struck by the simple faith of the old fisherman in his Risen Savior. "How do you know that Christ is risen?" he asked. "Sir," came the reply, "do you see those cottages near the cliffs? Well, sir, sometimes when I'm far away out at sea I know that the sun is risen by the light that is reflected from yon cottage windows. How do I know that Christ is risen? Why, sir, do I not see his light reflected from the faces of some of my fellows every day, and do I not feel the light of his glory in my own life? As soon tell me that the sun is not risen when I see his reflected glory, as tell me that my Lord is not risen."—Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

O thou, without beginning, without end,
Let us all begin and end in thee.—Goldsmith.

Jesus Christ is the illumination and the inspiration of existence: without him the world is a puzzle, and death a horror, and eternity a blank.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. From what race do the redeemed in Heaven come? 2. What do we mean by the expression, "You're a white man"? 3. Why are the redeemed in Heaven said to wear white robes? 4. Of what are palm-branches symbolical? 5. What is the occupation of the redeemed? 6. What does the last clause of verse 15 mean? 7. What will be absent in Heaven?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE GLORIFIED CHRIST THE CENTER OF REVELATION

The Conception of Jesus Christ during the Middle Ages. The student of church history has many surprises, and one of them is the subordinate position which has been given to Jesus Christ through extended periods of Christian history. Through large parts of the Christian world, during what we call the middle ages, the Virgin Mary held the supreme place in the popular mind. Most of the prayers were offered to her. To her went out the richest love of the heart. Jesus was hidden behind his mother, and sometimes lost to view completely amid the vast company of the saints. The story told of an experience in the life of Martin Luther when he was a young man, throws a flood of light upon the mental habits of the early sixteenth century. Luther had been brought up in a pious home. Both of his parents were devout. When young Luther, overtaken by a thunder-storm in a field, saw his companion struck down by lightning, he fell upon his knees crying in consternation: "Help, Saint Anna! I'll be a monk." He did not think of crying to Jesus. He cried to Jesus' grandmother.

Even in Protestantism, Jesus has often been permitted to sink into the background, and the Gospels have been denied that supreme place which they claim and hold today. Luther exalted Christ, but it was the Christ he found in the Pauline Epistles rather than the Christ of the Gospels. The English Puritans of the seventeenth century placed the Old Testament on a level with the New, and some of them lived more in the Pentateuch and the Psalter than they did in the Gospels. The heart of John Wesley was kindled in the eighteenth century not by a sentence from the Gospels, but by an idea in a letter of Paul.—Dr. C. E. Jefferson, in Old Truths and New Facts.

The Recent Conception of Jesus Christ. Today the attention of the Christian world is focused on Jesus. Everything connected with his earthly life has become sacred to us. The whole Christian Church is interested in Palestine. Along with the labor of the explorer and artist in Palestine there has gone forward a work of investigation of the words and deeds of Jesus. The Gospels have been made the supreme subject of study. They have been studied as no other books have ever been studied since men learned how to study. Every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable has been dissected and analyzed, and compared and squeezed that every drop of its meaning might be gotten out. You who are busy in other fields have no conception of the vast and unwearied and painstaking and conscientious and fearless study which has been expended on these writings.

And what is the outcome of it all? An augmented emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. The man Jesus is now vivid to every eye. We know him as he lived and talked and worked in Palestine. We know him better than the men of any preceding generation have ever known him. He stands before us clean-cut, picturesque, fascinating. We see him—the Galilean Teacher. We see him teaching on the side of the hill, on the shore of the sea, in the temple. We see him, the Galilean Healer, the Great Physician, who had wonderful power over the bodies of men. We see him, the lovable and faithful Friend, the Comrade, the Companion, the Man who loved society and found supreme delight in fellowship. We see him, the Hero and Martyr, the Man who was crucified outside the wall of Jerusalem, and who was buried in a rich man's tomb. All this has been made possible by the indefatigable labors of scholars within the last hundred years.—Condensed from Old Truths and New Facts, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Where the New Emphasis Must be Placed upon Jesus Christ. The emphasis on the physical side of Jesus' life, however, has not been without sundry regrettable consequences. We have studied the Man Jesus so long that we have become somewhat blind to his majesty. Familiarity has not begotten contempt, it could never do that, but it has taken off some of the edge of our reverence. We do not feel the awe which the exile on Patmos felt.

The Jesus of popular thought is a meek and mild-eyed Saint who was always saying gracious things and always doing gentle deeds. Jesus, according to many business men, is the Consoler. He is the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He has a heart overflowing with pity, and therefore he is of great service to those who are poor or sick or lying at the gates of death. But Jesus has nothing to do with business. "Business is business," men say, with an accent that is final. Jesus, to be sure, insists on the principle of service, but what can you do with that in business? The principle of coöperation is extolled in the New Testament, but the modern world is foundationed on the principle of competition, and what has Jesus to do with our social order? He is a beautiful Saint who long ago said lovely things, but the captains of industry and the kings of commerce have no use for his exhortations or laws.

If business is business, so is politics politics. A man in politics must get his candidate into office, and he has no time to consult Jesus Christ about the way in which he does it. The world is what it is, and men must be influenced as they can be and not as they ought to be, if the political party is to triumph. Men who are called to do the rough work of the world cannot allow themselves to be handicapped by the theories and ideals of a Teacher who lived so long ago. This is the feeling that possesses the heart of the average politician. It does not occur to him that he has anything to do with Jesus Christ.

We need to come to this book of Revelation, and study carefully the Jesus Christ at whose feet the seer on Patmos fell. John looks calmly out upon the world, and in the midst of the welter of confusion and chaos, he sees Jesus walking. He is no longer the meek and quiet Teacher who has instructed peasants by

the Sea of Galilee; he is now the august and mighty Son of God. His eyes are flames. His countenance shines, his feet burn. The sword of his authority cuts. He holds safe in his strong right hand all the churches. Ponder this stupendous act of faith. John takes the Jesus of Nazareth and puts him at the center of the stage of the world's history. He lifts him out of Galilee, and makes the entire world his province. He takes a Palestinian Peasant, poor and despised through his life, dying at last on a cross as a condemned criminal, and dares seat him on the throne of the universe. He gives him eyes which see through everything, a sword sharper than the sword of Domitian, and feet able to trample all opposition into the dust. He endows him with the attributes of God.

When *you* look upon Jesus Christ, what do you see—a Teacher, a Healer, a Martyr, only a Man who is one among a company of heroes and saints who have brightened the world by their words and their deeds? If that is all you see, you make Christianity a sort of Confucianism, and Jesus is only a tall ethical Teacher. You make the Christian religion a sort of Buddhism, and Jesus is merely a sweet soul who taught gentleness and resignation. The prisoner on Patmos saw more than that. He saw Jesus Christ as Lord of all. Do *you* see him as Lord of Lords? This is the central doctrine of the Christian Church. Jesus Christ is the Lord of history. He is the Judge of nations and races. He walks in the midst of the things you see. In him you behold the mind and the heart and will of the Eternal.—Condensed from Old Truths and New Facts, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

The Glorified Christ of the Revelation the Center of History. When our Lord said that he was coming in the clouds of heaven, he made use of a figure which had long been common on the pens of apocalyptic writers. He did not mean to say that he was coming on rolling masses of aqueous vapor. What he meant was that he would come in stormy times, in vast social upheavals and commotions, in mighty reformations and revolutions, in political convulsions and national tragedies; and so he has often come. He came in the destruction of Jerusalem, when the temple disappeared in smoke, and when the bodies of the slaughtered dead were piled in sickening heaps around the demolished city walls. His words were literally fulfilled. Not one stone was left standing on another. He came again in the downfall of the Roman Empire. He sat as Judge, and the mighty Empire of the Cæsars passed away. It was he who said: "Depart, ye cursed." He came again in the French Revolution. For generations the lords and nobles of France had trodden the common people under their feet, and at last the Lord of Lords ascended the throne, and the old régime, which had made it hard for men to love, came down in blood and ashes.

Look out upon Europe today, and what do you see? Can you not see that this is a Judgment Day, and that all of the nations have been summoned to stand before Christ? Do you not see that he has revealed himself again as the Lord of Lords, and that he has cast the nations into hell? Lift up your eyes and look! Do you not see him? You are blind if you do not see him! He has come. He is here. His eyes are flame. His feet are brass. He is trampling into nothingness the things which obstruct his purposes.

What, then, is the modification which we may reasonably expect in our conception of Jesus Christ? A shifting of the emphasis, I think, from his humanity to his divinity; a less exaggerated estimate of his gentleness and meekness, and a fuller recognition of his majesty, severity, and power.—Condensed from Old Truths and New Facts, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. What we hear and see depends upon our spiritual receptiveness.

2. The vision and the voice. See Chapter 1 of A First Century Message to Twentieth Century Christians, by Dr. G. Campbell Morgan; Chapter I of Old Truths and New Facts by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do the words of praise in verse 10 mean? 2. What is the force of "My lord, thou knowest," verse 14? 3. Of what is white symbolical? 4. Of what are palm-branches symbolical? 5. What did one of the elders "answer," verse 13? 6. What is meant by the elder's answer to his question? 7. What is perpetual in Heaven? 8. What Beatitude sums up the last verse? 9. Of what advantage is it to meditate upon Heaven? 10. What is the message of the Book of Revelation for this age?

JOHN'S PICTURE OF WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

Golden Text

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. Revelation 7.12

LESSON Revelation 7.9-17 DEVOTIONAL READING Revelation 19.6-10

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Revelation 4.1 to 5.14; 19.1-10; 21.1-8

REVELATION 7.9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice, saying,

Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.

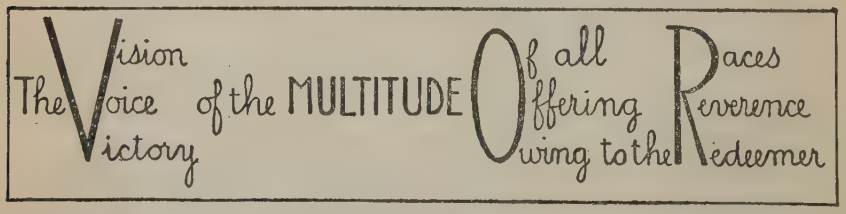
11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying,

Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE WORSHIPPING MULTITUDES, verses 9, 10. John next beheld in his vision *a great multitude,* so great that *no man could number* them, yet more striking than their vastness was their polyglot character, for they were *out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues.* This multitude was *standing before the throne and before the Lamb.* Life "before the throne of God," observes Dr. Swete, is life wherever spent, if it is dominated by a joyful consciousness of the Divine Presence and Glory. The people were *arrayed in white robes.* "White, in the language of colors, means right; and it means also the peace and joy which flows from being and doing right. White is the combination of all the colors, and thus it is the symbol of the pure white light of holiness—the symbol of the purity and glory of Heaven." And they carried *palms in their hands.* Palm-branches were carried at the Feast of Tabernacles, and they were scattered before the Christ as he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. They were the emblem of conquest, and were regarded as appro-

priate for any season of joy as well as of triumph. "The carrying of palm-branches is a sign of festive joy in the Greek and Roman as well as in the Jewish world." "What have they conquered?" questions Dr. Jowett. "Self," he replies. "Each has dethroned self that he may crown his brother. By love they serve one another."

Then with one voice the multitude cried, *Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb,* thus ascribing their great deliverance to God and to Christ.

II. THE WORSHIPPING ANGELS, verses 11, 12. *All the angels were standing round the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures.* See 4.4-11. The angels endorse the praise offered by the Redeemed with an *Amen,* and add: *Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* Note that their tribute of praise is seven-fold.

III. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION, verses 13-14. Perhaps, like Dante (Paradise, 4.10-72), Dr. Vincent suggests, John although silent showed desire painted on his face, and that look one of the elders answered. *These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?* he questioned. "The vision was not a mere spectacular display, but a revelation; and its point must not be missed." And John replied, *My Lord,* (a respectful address to a superior) *thou knowest*—and I would know also. And the elder returned, *These are they that come out of the great tribulation.* "The great distress is plainly the period of persecution and martyrdom (6.11) predicted (e. g. Mt. 24.21, from Dan. 12.1) to herald the final catastrophe" (Exp. Greek Testament). *They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* "The purity which they wear is a divine gift and not a human accomplishment. It cannot be attained by self-sacrifice; it is ours through the sacrifice of our Lord" (Jowett).

IV. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN, verses 15-17. *Therefore* (because of this washing) *are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple.* "Perpetual service will find its stimulus and its reward in the perpetual vision of him who is served." A group of young monks were being questioned upon the book of Revelation. They were asked which promise or saying in the book was to them the most comforting. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," said one. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying," said another. "To him that overcometh shall I grant to sit down with me on my throne," said a third. But the youngest—Thomas à Kempis—answered, "His servants shall serve him." *And he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them.* "Shall overshadow them with a presence of brooding, intimate care."

Verse 16 is from Isaiah 49.10. There shall be freedom from hunger and thirst and heat. The Egyptian dead are said to yearn for a cooling breeze in the next world—"Let me be placed by the edge of the water with my face to the north, that the breeze may caress me, and my heart be refreshed from its sorrows."

"It is to God as the fountain of life (Ps. 35.10) that the Lamb leads his sheep. The interpretation is supplied by John's Gospel: Jn. 4.12, 14; 7.38. Blessed—so Bede sums up in the words of the second Beatitude—are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

See the last lesson.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. People often wonder what Heaven is like and wish that they could get a glimpse of it. The Apostle John must have often thought about it and longed to see it. When he was an old man he saw Heaven in a vision, and he has told us about it in that book from which we had a lesson last week. What is the book? What was his vision whose account we studied a week ago?

John's Glimpse of Heaven. John saw it to be the place of *a crowd.* A vast multitude filled its streets. And what a crowd it was! It had been gathered out of every nation, from all corners of the earth. But though the people here

on earth were so different in race and language and life, there they wore the same white robes, and owed their presence there to the same cleansing blood. What a fine idea this gives you of Heaven! It is not a place which keeps out every one it can. It is crowded, and any one is received who is a follower of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.

He saw it to be a place of *a throne*. There was authority there, and every one obeyed. Here on earth there are laws and authorities enough, but hosts of people do not obey them when they can help it, and the result is that there is suffering and sorrow and trouble everywhere. But John saw no trouble in Heaven. Everybody gathered about the throne and worshipped before it, and all was order and beauty and peace. Some boys and girls think it would be Heaven to do just as they like, but that would be opposite of Heaven.

He saw it to be a place where *evil things were lacking*. The people found that they had lost many familiar things. Hunger was lost, thirst and heat, tribulation, death and tears. All these things had vanished and would never be seen again. How often they had longed to be freed from them! Imagine waking up some morning to find all your troubles and disappointments behind you for ever! That is just what will happen when you do go to Heaven. Shall you want them back? Not one of them. It makes Heaven a beautiful place because they are not there.

He saw it to be the place of an *unchanged life*. What had those people been doing on earth? Jesus had been their Shepherd and they had loved and followed him. And in Heaven he was still their Shepherd whom they were serving and following. They were living the same life, only free from all the old burdens and drawbacks. Heaven, then, means service, and therefore growth.

One Thing we Know about Heaven. "Mother," said Will, "do you really *want* to go to Heaven? And do you think *we* ought to want to go?"

"That's just what *I* was going to ask," said Betty. "Do you think we shall really *enjoy* ourselves, mother? I know it sounds wicked to ask," lowering her voice and looking ashamed.

But mother didn't seem shocked. "My dears," she said, "you enjoy yourselves now, don't you?"

The children all agreed that they did.

"And who gives you your good times here?"

"You do, mother!"

"But who gave me to you, and you to me, children? Wasn't it our Heavenly Father? And wasn't it he who made this beautiful world for us to live in? When he gives you another home, is it likely that it will be a less beautiful and a less happy one?"

The three looked at their mother, open-eyed, then drew a long breath.

"I never thought of it just like that before," said Will.—From a Story by Grace Winter, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

The New Home. Journeying the other day from Boston to Denver, I noticed in the car two boys. They were talking together: and I heard one of them ask the other, "Where are you going?" "O,—out West!" was the answer. And I was sure that the boy had no idea where "out West" was: whether it was a large place or a small place, or how he was going to get to it.

But he evidently wasn't troubling himself about it! And I didn't wonder, when I heard him tell the rest of the story. His father had been "out West," wherever that was, and had been making there a new home for the family. And now he had gone back to Massachusetts, where they had been living, and was taking the family with him to the new home "out West." There he sat, in the next seat to the boy, with his family about him. He looked as though he could take good care of them all. So the boy had nothing to fear or to worry about.

The other boy asked him once, "But where is the place?" And he simply said, "O, I don't know: papa's got a house out there for us."

It made me think of a beautiful text; the words of Jesus to his disciples. It is in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John. Hear it! "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself: that where I am there ye may be also." Jesus has gone to prepare a new home for his children. It will surely be a beautiful home, for he himself will live in it: and we may be sure that he will have everything beautiful about him. And he will make it beautiful, too, for those he loves.

We sometimes wonder where the new home will be. People often ask, "Where is Heaven?" Nobody can tell us. I suppose that is because God's universe is so great, and we know so little: just as the little fellow did not know where "out West" was because it is so big, and he was only a little boy. But we need not be a bit troubled, if we do not know. Jesus knows. He has "prepared" the place on purpose for us.—Frank T. Bayley, "Little Ten-Minutes."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Revelation 21.7; Acts 4.12; Jn. 1.9.

Earth is our little island home,
And Heaven the neighboring continent,
Whence winds to every inlet come
With balmiest scent.—Lucy Larcom.

I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what God is preparing for him.—Rutherford.

For Review Sunday. Come prepared to tell what Peter and John did in their work of winning others for Christ.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: A VISION OF THE GLORIOUS FUTURE

Additional Material: Revelation 19.1-9; 22.1-5.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The Bible begins and ends with an allegory. The first book declares that the universe is God's work, and that this earth, notwithstanding its mysteries of sorrow and pain and death, is very good. The last book reveals a new earth where there shall be no more sorrow or pain or death, and a celestial city, with its water of life, in which there shall be no more night, for its light is the glory of God.

Just before the sinking of the Lusitania, Mr. Charles Frohman said to a companion: "Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure of life." Mr. Frohman's words seem to echo the spirit of the message of John's Revelation: "Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure of life. It is the entrance to the mansions which our Savior has gone to prepare for us, that where he is, there we may be also."

A Great Multitude Arrayed in White Robes. In the army it is a term of supreme praise to call a man *white*. When you say a comrade is a *"white man"* there is no more to be said. It is worth more than the Victoria Cross with its red ribbon; for it includes gallantry, and adds to it goodness. A man must be brave to be called white; and he must be generous, noble and good. To reach whiteness is a great achievement. To be dubbed white is, in the army, like being dubbed knight at King Arthur's Court or canonized saint in the Church. He stands out among a soldier's comrades distinct as a white handkerchief among khaki ones.

I don't know where the term came from; but, wherever it may have tarried on the way, I think its footprints could be traced back to the Book of Revelation for its starting place. In the first chapter we have a picture of Christ as the first "White Man"—"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." In the second chapter his faithful followers are given "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written." Is not the new name "White man"? In the third chapter we read of "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." There, too, the Laodiceans are counseled to buy "white raiment." In the fourth chapter we see the four and twenty elders, sitting around the throne under the rainbow arch, "clothed in white raiment." In the sixth chapter we have the crowned King going "forth conquering, and to conquer"; and he is sitting on "a white horse," that is, he uses "white" instruments to carry out his conquests. And surely the climax is reached when we read in the seventh chapter of "A great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes." So striking was the scene that one of the elders asked, "These that are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" And the answer is given, "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God."

In the army white has come back to its ancient significance. The brave and noble martyrs of the early Church were given "white robes," and in the army today the brave and pure wear "white robes" in the eyes of their comrades. When Clifford Reed was killed by a shell at his Regimental Aid Post, his colonel wrote of him that he was the "whitest man" he had ever known. He had done more than wear "the white flower of a blameless life." His virtues were positive, not merely negative. He wore a "white robe"; not a mere speck of white such as a white flower in a buttonhole would appear. White is a positive color, not a negative. Reed was more than "blameless," he was "white and all white." To our soldiers a white handkerchief speaks of home, and a "white man" speaks of honor and heroism and heaven.—Thomas Tiplady, in The Soul of the Soldier.

There Shall be No Tears, No Sorrow, No Death.

"I hear thee speak of a better land;
Thou call'st its children a happy band;
Mother! oh where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fireflies dance through the myrtle boughs?"
"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy;
Ear hath not heard its deep sounds of joy;
Dreams can not picture a world so fair,—
Sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time does not breathe on its fadeless bloom;
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there, my child!"—Felicia D. Hemans.

Heaven Begins Here. Our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers used to talk much about where Heaven was. And some thought it was above the clouds, and others thought it would be here on earth, after all the wickedness and selfishness were done away. Every one, however, used to think that the New Jerusalem, with its pearly gates and golden streets, was a real place like the cities of today.

But we think of Heaven more as the feeling in our hearts when we are happy from being with our friends, or when we have done right and unselfish things. We know what it is, then, to have heaven on earth. And when we have heaven on earth, we know pretty nearly what the real Heaven is like.

Let me show you what I mean. Not long ago a speaker in a rescue mission asked the children if they could tell him where Heaven was. Immediately a boy from the poorest section of the city sprang up, raised his hand and cried shrilly: "I know; I know." "Well, my boy, where is Heaven?" the astonished leader asked. "Back in our street since mother got acquainted with Jesus," was the answer.

That boy was on the right track. Whenever Christ comes into the heart there comes with him love and thoughtfulness of others. And when we do kind things for others, we find happiness for ourselves, and that is heaven. Christ says, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." That means, when we do things that we believe Christ would like to have us do, then he comes in to sup with us. And when we feel Christ as our Companion, then it is heaven.

We may go to a beautiful place called Heaven when we die, but it will be Christ who will make the place full of joy and gladness. And if we are to see him in that land and enjoy that Heaven, we must first make a heaven here on earth for ourselves and others by trying to please him and to be like him every day.—Howard J. Chidley, in Fifty-two Story Talks.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

But what is Heaven, Great God, compared to thee?
Without thy Presence, Heaven's no Heaven for me.—Francis Charles.

The first thing to consider in life is the end of it, its height and ultimate design.—Dr. Watkinson.

We, too, can begin now to wear the white robe, and even now can we carry the palm, and even now can we join in the song of ceaseless praise.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Earth holds Heaven in the bud; our perfection there is to be developed out of our imperfections here.—Christina Rossetti.

O, the joy to see thee reigning,
Thee, my own beloved Lord!
Every tongue thy name confessing
Worship, honor, glory, blessing.
Brought to thee with glad accord!
Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned!
Unto earth's remotest end
Glorified, adored, and owned!—Frances Ridley Havergal.

Think of Heaven with hearty purpose.—Jeremy Taylor.

Any view of the future may be fairly tried by this criterion—does it strengthen, gladden, inspire us in the present?—John Watson.

For Review Sunday. Come prepared to tell how Peter and John carried out the great commission given them by their Lord.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE PERMANENT MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. When Dr. J. H. Jowett wished to talk one morning to his congregation about the realms of the blest, he apologized a little for his theme. "I remember that when I first came out of college and took up the work of the Christian ministry," he said, "I felt with a good many other young reformers that instead of singing about the things of the blessed and the doings of the eternal life, I would engage the interest of my congregation in the condition of the slums, and the uncleanness of the common streets of our own city. Rather than waste sentiment and thought upon the life that is to be, I would seek to concentrate all our energy in bettering the life that is." But Dr. Jowett had learned a larger lesson. "I have discovered," he continued, "that no man works less eagerly in the slums, because now and again he has a view of the City of God, and no man has a softened fibre because he stimulates his imagination in trying to realize the life that is to be."

Let us give a little time to the contemplation of the better land, and the Lord of the better land, as John pictures it in the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation.

The Inadequacy of Words. We cannot by the most felicitous words convey any definite idea of the odor of flowers. If we wished to describe the scent of a strange flower, we should find that language failed to convey to another the impression that the flower has made upon us. A foreign naturalist informs us that he strove hard to get a just idea of the songs of British birds; he inquired of those who knew bird music and carefully read ornithological works, yet all his efforts were fruitless; when at last he heard these singers, every song came as a surprise. We cannot with words give any idea of the sounds emitted by nightingale, blackbird, or skylark. And we may be very sure that words must prove inadequate to express the sublimest emotions of the soul. Our supernal moments, soaring thoughts, lightning insights, and rapturous sensations of power and gladness, defy expression.

Those who are familiar with Dr. W. L. Watkinson's writings will at once recognize these words as from his pen. Let us meditate for a moment upon the thought he has brought to us. Then think of the ecstasy of John's spirit when he had his vision of Heaven, and marvel that he found words that could attempt to express the scenery and music of that universe.

John's Picture of Heaven. *It is a life of rest.* I do not wonder that Faber, in one of his books, when he had mentioned this word "rest," added the sentence: "Let us stay and suck that word as if it were a honey-comb." Now people who are never tired cannot know the significance of rest. But people who have to labor very hard, and amid very straitened circumstances, find in the word a delicious consolation. I remember once talking with a fisher-woman who had lost her husband and two sons at sea. I asked her what she liked most to think about when she thought about the land beyond, and I was not surprised to hear her say, "And there shall be no more sea." And when you go to very tired people, people who are not only physically tired but mentally worn, there is no word which appeals to them with such sweet significance as just this

common word "rest." I said to one of my people the other day, as I stood by his dying bed, "Rest comes at length!" And the tired eyes lit up, and I knew the meaning of the expectancy that leaped into his hungry eyes. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat"; "there shall be no more pain."

It is a life of quest. It is not a life of mere passivity, but a life of glorious activity. First of all our quest is to be under the immediate leadership of our Lord: "He shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life." The unveiling of new things, the unsealing of new springs! When we have dropped the clay and the veil of the flesh, we shall stand out with immeasurably increased powers of perception, and going with our Lord as our personal conductor among the wonders of unveiled truth and all the splendors of glory, with our immeasurably intensified powers, we shall find countless kinds of new and unimaginable delights break out before us on every side.

It is a life of service. I like that little phrase which Swedenborg uses concerning the employments of Heaven: "There will be occupation but no labor." The worker is never tired! His activity is never toil! It is a life of uses, and every soul will have its individual enterprise.

And it is a life of wondrous communion. First of all, it is communion with one another. I sometimes say to my people when they are telling me their sorrows and their troubles, and when neither the teller nor the hearer can find even the faintest clue, "You will explain it to me some day!" I say it as a glorious conviction that one of the joys and delights of the heavenly country will be the perfect understanding of the things that have bewildered us here. We shall get the clue, and we shall tell one another the story which down here we found a burden and a destroyer of our peace.

But preëminently, and above all other things, *it is to be a life of fellowship with the Lord.* "Forever with the Lord! Amen, so let it be!" "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall tabernacle among them." It is a homely figure; it is the figure of a meeting-place of many tents, and our God comes and adds his tent to the number. He is one with us, one among us; allowing us to go into his tent, and coming into our tent, a life of shared fellowship, a life of close intimacy in the things of the blessed.

Well, now, let us give a little time to thinking about these things. In twelve months' time some of us will probably be in the heavenly country. Surely it is well just to think a little about the glories and beauties of the land. "Half-an-hour in Heaven," said a working man to me one day, "half-an-hour in Heaven and I am ready for anything!" Spend a little time with the Lord now, and you will be prepared to spend the *"for ever* with the Lord."—Condensed from The Silver Lining, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Dr. Robert J. Burdette's Certainty of Heaven. I have never seen it. I have never seen anyone who has been there. But it has a more abiding reality than any of these lands which I do know. This land beyond the sunset—this land of immortality, this fair and blessed country of the soul—why, this Heaven of ours is the one thing in the world which I know with absolute, unshaken, unchangeable certainty. This I know with a knowledge that is never shadowed by a passing cloud of doubt. I may not always be certain about this world; my geographical locations may sometimes become confused. But that other world—that I know.

The New Home.

Life changes all our thoughts of Heaven;
At first we think of streets of gold,
Of gates of pearl and dazzling light,
Of shining wings and robes of white,
And things all strange to mortal sight.
But in the afterward of years
It is a more familiar place;
A home unhurt by sighs or tears,
Where waiteth many a well-known face.
With passing months it comes more near.
It grows more real day by day;
Not strange or cold, but very dear—
The glad homeland not far away,
Where none are sick, or poor, or lone,

The place where we shall find our own.
And as we think of all we knew
Who there have met to part no more,
Our longing hearts desire home, too,
With all the strife and trouble o'er. —Robert Browning.

The Message of the Book of Revelation to the Twentieth Century. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." These were the words of Jesus as reported in John's Gospel. The message of the whole Book of Revelation could not be better summed up than in these words. It is a message we need.

Mary North Blakeslee, writing in the Christian Work, tells the same truth in the following words: "It is wasted learning to interpret the message of the Book of Revelation in any specific way. But it has a meaning for us, if we can take it as it was written, in a time of great stress, to uphold God's people and keep them steadfast in their faith. Read it some day, when the gloom is deepest, when success in one quarter is balanced by failure in another, when treachery and apathy and blundering at home seem to nullify our most pathetic sacrifices; read it just as it stands, without trying to expound or understand. As you read the cloud will lift. Here are tumults of the nations, here are battles of the kings; the whole world seems turned over to the powers of evil. And yet steadily the plan unfolds. Out of the confusion of symbols and opening of seals the sound of trumpets and angelic voices, "woes" and destructions that overwhelm the whole world, we hear the undertone of God's great purposes and clear as a bugle call the notes of hope and triumph. The strong voices of mighty angels are pronouncing doom, and yet bringing hope. The visions roll up like great thunder clouds, "full of wrath and storm," but they pass swiftly at last, as the clouds part into a glorious sunset—into the beautiful vision of the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, shining with a diamond-like radiance which is the clear light of the presence of God. Here are "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," a place prepared, where the glory and honor of all nations shall be gathered and all the tumults and miseries of this earth shall be purged away.

The Living Message of the Book of Revelation. I thank God for this book. Symbolic as it is, full of signs and wonders, the significance of which I have not yet been able to understand in detail, it nevertheless clearly presents the picture of God, the Alpha and the Omega, at war with sin; and it is as full of comfort as anything within the covers of the Divine Library. Persuade me for a single moment that God is going to make peace with sin and I become the most hopeless man in the world. Let me see God with drawn sword fighting against sin; then I see a God of such infinite love, that I know that "though a wide compass first be fetched," the kingdom of the world shall become the Kingdom of this One.

In making application of the message of this book first to the Church, I would say this is preëminently a book for the friends of Jesus. To know it is to be saved from mistakes about his Person, about his Power, about his Program. There is no book in the Bible to which I turn more eagerly in hours of depression than to this, with all its mystery, all the details which I do not understand. I go back to it, to the throne, and to the Lamb as it had been slain; and my puzzled mind and troubled heart feel the healing virtue; and I hear the song, and am ready for another day's fighting, for I know that Jesus shall reign.

To the individual this book says, Behold the new creation; and by observing that understand the truth about thyself. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Study well the beauty and the glory of life governed by this Person, and know the meaning of thy life in Christ. Study well the processes of life in the new creation, and understand the principles of thy life in Christ. Know that this new creation within thy experience can only come to its final perfecting as God fights within thee against sin and slays it. The ultimate victory is not reached in a moment. Pardoned, justified, made nigh, we are, in a moment; but all the processes are necessary for the subjection of the territory, and the establishment of the Kingdom; thunder, earthquake, as well as the gentle and caressing touch of the dawning of the morning. Jesus who is the Lamb in the midst of the throne is God; and in his presence is the place of worship; and in his power is the place of refuge.—Condensed from Living Messages of the Books of the Bible, by Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

REVIEW: THE LIFE AND WORK OF PETER AND JOHN

Golden Text

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28.19, 20

SELECTION FOR READING Revelation 21.21 to 22.5

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS John 1.42; 21.15-24; 1 Peter 1.3; 1 John 1.1-4

A REVIEW FOR JUNIORS AND INTERMEDIATES

Peter and John Winning Others for Christ. What were Peter and John doing when Jesus called them to follow him? What did Jesus tell them he would make of them? When Peter and John were fishermen they had always been ready to seize every favorable chance for fishing, and they were just as alert and ready in their work of fishing for men, in seeking to win men for Christ. When the crowd came running together at Pentecost, Peter at once began to preach. When there was a stir in Samaria, Peter and John hastened there. When they were arrested and brought before the authorities, they seized that as an opportunity to proclaim that Jesus is the Christ. When Cornelius sent for Peter, Peter went at once to the home of Cornelius and told him and his household about Jesus. Always on the watch, ever ready to carry out the great commission which their Master gave them, were these two great disciples. What was that commission, as our Golden Text gives it?

And what adventures and experiences they had in their work for Christ! Some of them were pleasant, but many were very hard to bear. What did they suffer? They were often lonely and weary, they were often mobbed and even scourged, flung into prison, treated as criminals. But after every hard experience they were back at once at the task Jesus had given them of winning others to their Lord and Master. Who tried to make them give up their mission? What answer did Peter give? "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."

"Grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness," was the petition of the early disciples, and the record shows that God heard their prayer and granted it.

Like their Master, these two were not indifferent to the needs and sufferings of others, they cared for others' bodies as well as souls. They did not go about with their heads held so high that they failed to see the misery around them. If they could not give people money, they gave them what they had. In what words did Peter express this thought? To whom did he say this? What then did he do for this man? What was the effect upon others of this miracle of healing? Recall also the deeds of mercy which he did in Lydda and Joppa. What were they?

Peter and John had wonderful success in their work. Think of the multitude at Pentecost whom their words led to the Savior, and of the crowds in Samaria, to say nothing of individuals like the Roman centurion.

Each of them wrote letters in which they taught what they had learned from Jesus. What did Peter tell followers of Christ they must do? What did John tell them they must do? What did John tell them about Jesus Christ in glory? Jesus was with them always, and through his Spirit's power they spread the

Gospel, made disciples of multitudes of men, and taught them to observe the things Christ had commanded.

A REVIEW FOR SENIORS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

The Contributions of Peter and John to Christian History. *Peter* figures conspicuously in the history of the Apostolic Church. He was recognized as the leader. It was on his motion that a successor was appointed to Judas between the Ascension and Pentecost, and it was he who acted as spokesman on the day of Pentecost. He wrought miracles in the name of Jesus; he fearlessly confessed Jesus, setting the rulers at naught; as head of the Church, he exposed and punished sin; he suffered imprisonment and scourging.

The persecution consequent on the martyrdom of Stephen, by scattering the believers, inaugurated a fresh development of Christianity, involving a bitter controversy. The refugees preached wherever they went, and thus arose the question, on what terms the Gentiles should be received into the Church. Must they become Jews and observe the rites of the Mosaic Law? In this controversy Peter acted wisely and generously. Being deputed with John to examine into it, he approved Philip's work among the hated Samaritans, and invoked the Holy Spirit upon his converts, and before returning to Jerusalem made a missionary tour among the villages of Samaria. His Jewish prejudice was thoroughly conquered by his vision at Joppa and the conversion of Cornelius and his company at Cæsarea; and, when taken to task by the Judaistic party at Jerusalem for associating with uncircumcised Gentiles, he vindicated his action and gained the approval of the Church. (For Peter's further connection with this Gentile question, read Acts 15.1-29; Galatians 2.1-21.)

There are copious traditions about Peter. Suffice it to mention that he is said to have gone to Rome (which is quite possible) and labored there for twenty-five years (utterly impossible), and to have been crucified (compare Jn. 21.18, 19) in the last year of Nero's reign (A. D. 68), being at his own request nailed to the cross head downwards, since he deemed himself unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord.

According to the ancient and credible testimony of Papias of Hierapolis, a hearer of St. John at Ephesus, our Second Gospel is based upon information derived from Peter. Mark had been Peter's companion, and heard his teaching and took notes of it. From these he composed his Gospel. He wrote it, Jerome says, at the request of the brethren at Rome when he was there with Peter; and on hearing it Peter approved it and authorized its use by the Church.

No Epistle of the New Testament has caught more of the spirit of Jesus than First Peter. Imbued with a strong love for the risen Christ, and a profound conviction of the truth of the Gospel as established in the world by the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, the author delineates a rich Christian life on the basis of these evangelical facts.

In the early part of the Acts, *John* is associated with Peter on three occasions. One was the healing of the lame man by the temple gate, the next was their appearance before the Sanhedrin in Chapter 4. In 8.15 we read that the two were sent by their brother-apostles to Samaria, after Philip had preached there. These typical instances show that at the outset of the history of the Church Peter and John came together to the front and were recognized as co-leaders, though they were very different in personal character, and Peter appears always to have been the spokesman.

This note of personal leadership is confirmed by the incidental reference of Paul in Galatians 2.9 where James (not the son of Zebedee), Cephas and John are "reputed to be pillars" in the Church at Jerusalem.

Our knowledge of John's history and character is largely increased, and the interest in his personality is greatly deepened, when he is identified with "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the author of the Fourth Gospel and the John of the Apocalypse.

Outside the New Testament only vague tradition enables us to fill up the gap left by Christianity's answer to Peter's question, "Lord, what shall this man do?" We may gather that he spent several years in Jerusalem. After an indefinite interval he is understood to have settled in Ephesus. Eusebius states that during the persecution of Domitian "the apostle and evangelist John" was banished to Patmos, and that on the accession of Nerva (A. D. 96) he returned

from that island and took up his abode in Ephesus, "according to the word of the ancients among us." All traditions agree that he lived to a great old age, and it is Jerome who tells of his being carried into the church when unable to walk or preach, and simply repeating the words, "Little children, love one another."

The three Epistles known by the name of John have from the beginning been attributed to the Apostle John. In the Gospel the foundations of Christian faith and doctrine are shown to lie in history; in the Epistle, the effects of belief are traced out in practice.—Condensed from Hasting's Dictionary.

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Juniors. 1. How many persons were led at Pentecost to accept Jesus as the Christ? 2. What did Peter do at the Beautiful Gate? 3. When the Sanhedrin ordered Peter and John not to preach in the name of Jesus, what answer did the apostles make? 4. What did Ananias and Sapphira pretend to do, and how were they punished? 5. Who was Dorcas, why did many grieve when she died, and what did Peter do for her? 6. What did Peter see in a vision, and what did the vision teach him? 7. Which apostle did Herod kill, which one did he imprison, and how did the latter make his escape? 8. What did Peter say in his First Epistle about the right way to treat those who wrong us? 9. What did John say in his Epistle about loving God and our neighbors? 10. What is the last book in the Bible, and who wrote it?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. How many chapters of what book have our lessons covered? 2. What happened in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? 3. Repeat the verse which answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?" 4. What great experience came to Peter on the house-top at Joppa and what was the lesson? 5. Which apostle was the first to suffer death, and by whose hands? 6. Briefly state what the following names suggest: Philip, Joppa, Cornelius, Lydda, Rhoda, Samaria, Æneas, Cæsarea, Ananias. 7. What was the great commission given the apostles, and how did they carry it out? 8. Who wrote that "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example"? What is the rest of the sentence? 9. What reason for loving others did John give? 10. Give John's description of the Glorified Christ and explain his meaning.

For Young People and Adults. 1. Who wrote the Acts and what was his purpose in this writing? 2. Give the main events recorded in the first twelve chapters of the Acts. 3. How were the disciples driven away from Jerusalem, and what was the result? 4. What perils without and what perils from within did the apostles have to face? 5. How was Peter cured of race prejudice? 6. What did Peter write about Christian living? 7. What did John write about love? 8. What did John write about Heaven?

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Explain the allusion in each of the following quotations:

We are in danger of obeying man rather than God, of thinking more about what others will say than about how God will judge.

Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel who can bid the gates unroll.—Van Dyke.

Let us so live that others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

That made me count the less of the sorrows when
I caught a glimpse of the Sorrowless Eternity.—Tennyson.

O breath of God!
In many a vigil of the night,
Like the great voice on Patmos heard
By John, the Evangelist of the Word,
I hear thee behind me saying: Write
In a book the things that thou hast seen,
The things that are, and that have been,
And the things that shall hereafter be!—Longfellow.

All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by thee are lit,
And dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight countries sit.—Whittier.

A spirit of lowly repose
In the love of the Lamb that was slain;
A heart to be touched with his woes,
And a care not to grieve him again.—Anna L. Waring.

A REVIEW OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

1. What is the full title of the book in the Authorized Version? 2. Is the book an account of the acts of the apostles? 3. Who are the two chief heroes of the book? 4. By whom was it written? 5. What reasons are there for believing that he wrote it? 6. What do you know about him? 7. When was it written? 8. What was the purpose of the writer? 9. How many chapters tell about the acts of Peter and John? 10. What is the character of the book? 11. What is the main outline of the first twelve chapters? 12. What lessons has the book for us?

FOR WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

For Juniors.
1. Peter and the Lame Man.
2. Peter's Courage to Do the Right.
3. What Rhoda Saw and Said and Heard.
4. Peter and a Roman Captain.

For Intermediates and Seniors.
1. The Book of Acts.
2. John's Words about Christian Love.
3. How Peter Became Broad-minded.
4. The Life History of Peter and John.

For Young People and Adults.
1. Peter as Shepherd of the Flock of God.
2. Peter's Discourses.
3. Peter's Epistles.
4. John's Epistles.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Juniors. 1. Why do we call this Easter Day? 2. On the first Easter what were the two disciples talking about as they walked away from Jerusalem? 3. What great hope had the death of Jesus destroyed in their hearts? 4. Who appeared to the disciples on the way? 5. Who did they think he was? 6. What troubles did they tell him? 7. How did he listen? 8. What did he tell them? 9. What does *behooved* mean? 10. What great joy came to the disciples? 11. How did they afterwards say they felt while Jesus was talking to them, and what did they mean by this? (Verse 32.) 12. What did they do as soon as they knew who their Companion had been? (Verse 33.)

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. When was "that very day," verse 13? (Verses 1-12.) 2. How many miles are three-score furlongs? 3. What does "their eyes were holden" mean? 4. Who were the "certain of them that were with us" who went to the tomb, verse 24? 5. What is the meaning of *behooved?* 6. Why did Jesus quote from the Old Testament instead of from the New? 7. What does the word *constrain* mean? 8. What are the proofs that Jesus rose from the dead?

For Young People and Adults. 1. In what other Gospel is this story told? (None.) 2. What allusion to it does Mark give? (Mk. 16.12, 13.) 3. How can the failure of the two to recognize Jesus be explained? 4. Why did Jesus ask his question of verse 19? 5. What are some of the prophecies in the Pentateuch and in the Prophets which Jesus may have interpreted to the two? 6. What are the proofs that Jesus rose from the dead?

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I—APRIL 4

EARLY LEADERS AND KINGS OF ISRAEL

(EASTER LESSON)

Golden Text

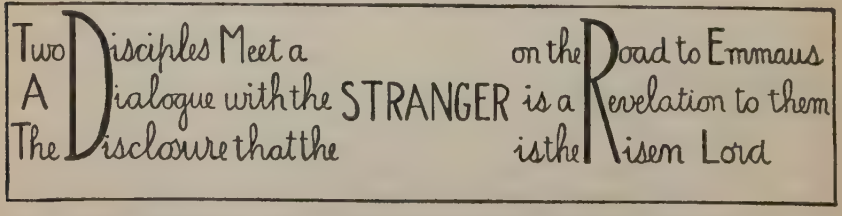
Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? Luke 24.26

LESSON Luke 24.13-35 DEVOTIONAL READING John 14.1-11

LUKE 24.13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. 14 And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17 And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. 18 And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. 22 Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; 23 and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. 29 And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. 30 And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


Two Disciples Meet a on the Road to Emmaus
A Dialogue with the STRANGER is a Revelation to them
The Disclosure that the is the Risen Lord

I. THE MEETING WITH JESUS ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS, verses 13-16. Two of the followers of Jesus, his disciples but not his apostles, *were going that very day,* the day of the resurrection, *to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem.* A furlong was one-eighth of a mile: sixty furlongs, seven miles and a half. As they were talking over the

sad events of the last few days, Jesus himself approached and went with them. *Their eyes were holden,* however, *that they should not know him. Holden* is the archaic form of *held:* their eyes were prevented from knowing him. "No supernatural divine act need be assigned, because (1) they were not expecting to see Jesus, and were too absorbed in their grief; (2) because all the records suggest that there was a change in Jesus' outward appearance (Lk. 24.37; Mk. 16.12; Jn. 20.14, 15; 21.4). But the Evangelist himself may have supposed a miracle. The A. V. and R. V. assume a miracle with a purpose; but the Greek may be also rendered 'so that they did not know him,' a simple result" (A. E. Garvie).

II. THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN CLEOPAS AND THE STRANGER, verses 17-27. Jesus began to question them and lead them to unburden their troubled hearts to him. *What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk?* he asked. "The tangle of their thoughts became a wrangle; they were deep in discussion ('throwing at each other,' says the Greek); and now Christ, in his own Person, offers the true solution to all such specious sort of speech. 'Talk to me, not to each other.' The truth to tell—if we realized his all-the-day presence more (for he is present whether we desire it or not)—then would we talk less to one another and more to him" (Dan Crawford). *And they stood still, looking sad.* Then *one of them, named Cleopas,* asked in astonishment, *Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?* "They meant that this itinerant stranger must be very much out of it indeed" (Dan Crawford). *What things?* questioned Jesus in his turn. "There is a nuance, a turn, and tone in our Lord's 'What things?' the missing of which means more than we dare do without. It is the hungry heart of the Lord leaping out in deep desire to hear from human lips the first recital of his travail on the Tree" (Dan Crawford).

They unburdened their hearts to their sympathetic Listener. "Eight vital facts they told him: (1) of a *Jesus the Nazarene,* which means, word for word, a Saviour of the worst, for 'Nazarene' meant the latter, and 'Jesus' the former. Then (2) they named him *mighty in deed and word,* for his walk ever squared with his talk. Also (3) all this because it was *before God,* first of all, then *all the people* afterwards. Now comes (4) his being sentenced to die and he did, but more than Christ died that day; for (5) there died also many a Hebrew hope *that it was he who should redeem Israel.* Further, and sorrowingly, they seem (6) to roll up a second stone to his tomb in the dark down-to-zero words, *And besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass.* Then (7: it ought to be the perfect number, and it is!), *Certain women amazed us, saying He was alive!* Lastly (8) certain of our own company (we did not go, but they did!) went to the sepulchre and found the facts fitted to the woman's version" (Dan Crawford).

O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! exclaimed Jesus at the end of their recital. *Behooved it not,* was it not fitting for, *the Christ,* the Messiah, *to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?* "The disciples had thought only of the prediction of the glory, and not also of the suffering of the Messiah."

And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. "The Law contained what were regarded as Messianic predictions, such as Gen. 3.15; 22.18; Num. 24.17; Dt. 18.15; and types, the scapegoat, the manna, the brazen serpent, the sacrifices generally. The writer does not mean that Jesus began from Moses and the prophets, and then went on to other writings such as the Psalms, but that, beginning from Moses, he quoted from all the prophets" (Garvie).

III. THE GREAT REVELATION, verses 28-31. On reaching the village, Jesus *made as though he would go further.* This was not pretence on his part, for had they not *constrained him,* by their entreaties, to stay, he would have gone on. *Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent,* they said. Recall our beautiful hymn, Abide with me, fast falls the eventide. At the evening meal *he took the bread and blessed,* offering the customary grace before partaking of food, *and breaking it he gave to them.* Then *their eyes were opened, and they knew him.* Perhaps the familiar words spoken by the familiar voice, or a familiar gesture in the breaking of the bread, verse 35, recalled him to their senses. At that moment *he vanished out of their sight.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things? verse 26. Death by crucifixion was the most ignoble death that could befall any one, in the opinion of the Jews of Jesus' day. The cross was to them a stumbling-block: he who died on the cross could not have been the Messiah. Hence Jesus explained to these disciples the necessity for the cross and the glory of the cross, demonstrating from the Scriptures that the very facts which they thought disproved his title of Messiah, in reality made good his claim.

And he vanished out of their sight, verse 31. Dr. Latham sees in this statement a special proof of the historicity of the incident, for an oriental, both as guest and as host, is bound by the strictest laws in all that relates to hospitality, and that a guest should suddenly leave a house in which he is being entertained —and that, too, in the midst of a meal—without saying farewell to his host, would be such an absolute outrage, he says, that no mere story-teller could have ventured to have introduced such an incident into anything he wrote.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How long after Christ's resurrection was Pentecost? In his sermon at that time whom did Peter accuse of Christ's death? What did he say in regard to the resurrection of Christ? What did he say about it in his sermon after the cure of the lame beggar? In his words to the Sanhedrin after his arrest? To Cornelius?

The Journey to Emmaus. Luke follows his account of the resurrection of Christ—the empty grave seen by Mary Magdalene and the other women and by Peter—with this beautiful incident which happened to two disciples on their way to Emmaus. He is the only Evangelist who records it, though Mark alludes to it in 16.12, 13.

The site of Emmaus is not positively known. Nicopolis, say many, but this is twenty miles from Jerusalem and too far away. El Kubeibeh, say others, which is but seven miles distant, about the threescore furlongs of verse 13.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Note that Jesus did not begin his interpretation of the Scriptures as soon as he overtook the two men on their way. They were engrossed in their own sorrowful thoughts, and they would not have welcomed the teaching of one whom they took to be a stranger. Though he well knew the cause of their sadness, he skilfully led them to tell him about it. After they had told him what had happened, and had given expression to their hopes and their fears, then they were ready for Jesus' consolation and revelation.

It is a great art, this, the art of drawing out your pupils. If you would be master of the art you must never repel confidences by showing yourself uninterested in or unsympathetic to your pupils' interests. The result of a wrong attitude is given in the following incident:

A little girl four years old made a picture on a scrap of paper. It meant nothing to any one but to her. To her it meant more than any other picture. She had made it, and she was full of new joy, because she had discovered that she had power to make a picture to correspond with her thought. She took it to her mother with her young heart full of hope for sympathetic appreciation. Her mother looked at the tangled lines that meant nothing to her, and said in the chilling tone of criticism: "Well, if I could not draw better than that I would not draw at all." Forty years after, the daughter said: "My mother shut a door that day between her soul and mine that was never opened again."

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE WALK WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Was the sky blue, the sun shining, the breeze blowing, and the view beautiful? Let us hope so, for they needed all the brightness they could get just then, those two disciples on their journey to Emmaus. Are we told why they took that particular journey on that day? They had nothing to do, so far as we can see, at Emmaus. They were sad and despondent, and went for a walk. What was the cause of their sorrow?

Remarkable Things about the Walk to Emmaus. This walk is remarkable for three things, at least. One was the *confession* that the two disciples made. They had not gone far before they found company. Somewhere along the road they were joined by a Stranger. He was a very sympathetic Man, and at once noticed how sad they were, and inquired the reason. They began to talk, and finding that he appeared to be ignorant of recent events they told him of the last days of Jesus and went on to confess their own disappointment. The Stranger proved to be a good Listener. He never once interrupted but waited until they had finished. And when they had come to the end, had rolled their burden on Somebody else, they felt much better. Confession is good for one who is troubled.

Then the walk is remarkable for a *revelation.* The Stranger turned out to be a Man who knew their Scriptures better than they did, and he proceeded at once to show them how the facts they had told about fitted the prophecies. And as he talked, the crucifixion and death of Jesus took on a new meaning for them, difficulties vanished, doubts went, their old faith in Jesus revived, and the world suddenly became a good place in which to live.

But of all the remarkable things about this journey the greatest was the *discovery* which the two disciples made. When they came to the little village they went to the inn or the house of a friend for the evening meal, and the Stranger began to say good-bye. But they would not let him go, and they all went in and sat down to eat. Then he broke the bread and blessed it as only one Man they knew had ever done, and it flashed upon them who he was. When they knew him they knew many things, why their hearts had burned, why the way and talk had been so delightful, and that the story the women had told them was true—their Christ was alive! But before they could speak and fall down and worship him, he had gone.

How long do you think it took them to get back to Jerusalem and tell their good news? Fired by such a discovery they were soon speeding on their way back to tell the others. There is always a reward for those who bear their troubles in the right way. They discover things about it and themselves and others and Jesus which make their lives richer and happier.

An Easter Joy-Bringer. "You're just in school here now, with all the other flowers," said Honor one day to the stately Easter lily in the next-door greenhouse. "Some day you'll graduate and go away to live with somebody. I wonder who it will be. But you can't take up a per-fession, like Brother Bob when he graduated, 'cause you're only a flower, you know."

The Flower Man replied for the lily. "O, yes, it can," he said. "It can be a joy-bringer, and joy-bringing is one of the most useful professions in the world."

The Flower Man and Honor were the best of friends. Sometimes he would let her give the flowers their shower-bath, and often he watched her as she cuddled her face lovingly against them and talked flower-talk to them. The one she loved best of all was the Easter lily, whose waxen buds she had watched from their tiniest babyhood.

A few days later, across the greenhouse the shining lily was holding up four glorious flowers and one new bud.

"I knew it! I was sure of it!" cried Honor as she skipped across the space between and touched her lips lightly to the newest blossoms.

"But somebody's bought you, my lovely joy bringer," she almost wailed as she noticed a slip of paper tied to the stem. "I wonder if it could be anybody I know, so I could come to see you sometimes."

She bent over the paper and read her own name, Honor Austin. She stood a moment in puzzled surprise.

"I know," she said at last, and her face was happy. "The Flower Man has given you to me, and I am the one you are to live with. You are a joy-bringer, you are, you are!" She danced away to find the Flower Man.

He smiled down into her happy face. "Yes," he said, "I thought you'd be the best one to start it off on its profession."

The lily went to church on Easter morning, and to a little mission Sunday-school in the afternoon, and to the schoolhouse on Monday, and on Tuesday to a sick woman in a little cabin.

The Flower Man said, "That's about the busiest graduate I ever sent out."—Lillian Manker Allen.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory verse: John 14, 19c.

Easter begins, like all deep things, in mystery, and it ends, like all high things, in a great courage.—Bliss Perry.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Abraham? 2. What was one thing that Joseph did in Egypt? 3. Who led the children of Israel out of Egypt? 4. Who led them into Canaan? 5. Why is the seventh book of the Old Testament called Judges? 6. What woman was a judge of Israel? 7. What did she do for her people? 8. What warrior helped her? 9. Who was her greatest Helper?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE PROOF THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

Additional Material: Luke 24.13-17, 27-31; 1 Corinthians 15.1-8.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. A traveler tells of beautiful lanterns hung on poles on the banks of a river in China that the spirits of the persons drowned in the stream may have light and cheer on their journey in the other world. To relatives of the dead, those lanterns bring comfort. There are lonely hearts everywhere on this glad Easter day, for it is the first Easter that some loved ones have been missed from their homes. What light and cheer would come to them all if they fully realized the great truth which Easter proclaims! Two travelers, lonely and sad, were leaving Jerusalem on the third day after the crucifixion of Christ. As they walked they communed with each other of all the things which had happened. The greatest event of all they knew nothing about: What was it?

Jesus Could not be Holden of Death. If we could enter a shell and speak to the bird about to break into the outer world, and tell it of the world so very near and yet so unseen, the bird might not be able to credit our teaching concerning that near but unseen world. How, then, should we be able to convince it of the truth of our statements? It seems to me that I should call the bird's attention to some things in itself that mean the existence of a world immediately outside the shell.

"What's the meaning of these wings if there is not a world where they can be used, and what is the significance of these eyes if there isn't light beyond the shell in which you are enclosed? And what possible use can there be for these feet if there isn't ground upon which they shall stand and walk?"

The bird would find in itself—in its eyes, and its wings, and its feet, conclusive proof of the existence of an unseen world, without which these parts of itself could have no possible meaning.

So we find in ourselves capacities, qualities, that are sufficient proof of the life beyond the grave, since those things are meaningless if such a life does not exist. That the finest things in our own souls are to be unfulfilled, that they are begun and then denied completion, is an incredible thought; it is a denial of the existence of God and the rationality of the universe. Our faith in the resurrection of Jesus rests not only upon the testimony of those who say they saw him alive from the dead, but also upon the feeling in our very souls that a life so rich, so valuable could not possibly be treated as worthless.—Frank H. Decker, in Truths that Save.

Invisible but Real. Here are two glasses of water which look just alike. (One contains a little nitrate of silver.) You cannot tell that there is any difference between them; yet there is a difference, although you cannot detect it. I will drop a pinch of salt into one, and then you will see how unlike they are. You notice a white cloud forming, which is called a precipitation.

I put the same amount into the other glass, and it does not change it. The reason why the salt produces the white precipitation in the first glass, is because there was in the water the chemical called nitrate of silver; the salt made its presence known to us. The silver was there before we put the salt into the glass, but we could not see it; our eyes were not able to detect its presence.

There are many things which exist in the world which our eyes are not sufficiently powerful to behold. In this we are like the disciples who were walking to Emmaus. Jesus drew near and walked and talked with them, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.

He has left us the promise, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. He draws near to us, and walks with us; but we are not able to

see him any more than our eyes could detect the silver in the glass of water. By and by our eyes will be opened to see; so we should trust him and love him now.—C. H. Tyndall, in Object-Lessons for Children.

Lord Salisbury's Faith. In a letter Lord Salisbury gave these reasons for his belief in the resurrection of Christ:

"Firstly, because it is testified to by men who had every opportunity of seeing and knowing, and whose veracity was tested by the most tremendous trials, both of energy and endurance, during long lives.

"Secondly, because of the marvelous effect it had upon the world. As a moral phenomenon, the spread and mastery of Christianity is without a parallel. I can no more believe that colossal moral effects lasting for 2,000 years can be without a cause, than I can believe that the various motions of the magnet are without a cause, though I cannot wholly explain them."

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

Ring, happy bells of Easter time!
Our happy hearts give back your chime.
"The Lord is risen!" We die no more;
He opens wide the heavenly door;
He meets us, while to him we climb,
At Easter time!—Lucy Larcom.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. With what accounts does Genesis begin? 2. Name the patriarchs. 3. How did it happen that the children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt? 4. Who freed them? 5. Where were forty years spent? 6. Who led them into the Promised Land? 7. Who ruled after he died? (Judges 2.16.) 8. For what purpose were judges raised up by God? (Judges 2.16.) 9. Who were the first three judges? (Judges 3.9; 15, 31.) 10. Who was the fourth judge? 11. In what respects was Deborah superior to Barak, her general? 12. Read Deborah's Song, chapter V. 13. What history is covered by the Book of Judges?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE FACT AND THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In our study of the lives of the apostles Peter and John during this last Quarter, we have seen *the power of the resurrection.* The apostles were full of daring; they were threatened, flogged, flung into prison, but they were never disheartened; they sang songs in the night, they boldly accused their persecutors of having put the Christ to death, and over and over again they proclaimed their great truth that Christ is risen, that he is the Lord and Conqueror of death and the grave; and in the power of their Risen Lord they went everywhere preaching Jesus Christ and his resurrection.

Today on this Easter Sunday we turn back to the Resurrection day, to that beautiful account of Christ's appearance to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus which only Luke records.

He is indeed Risen and Goeth before You. And he who had talked to them about fish-nets and field lilies, the power that lay in a sleeping mustard-seed and the priceless value of salt, who knew the market price of a sparrow and the concern of a woman who had lost a ten-cent piece, appears to them in the old, simple ways. It was the ordinary that was the unexpected, the common that became miraculous.

He is seen in the garden mistaken for the gardener himself: on the old Emmaus road among scores of foot-travelers hastening to the village before sundown; on the familiar beach preparing with his own hands an appetizing breakfast for his fasting, disheartened friends; at the most wonderful prayer-meeting ever recorded bringing peace and scattering doubt. His pulpit that had been oftenest the seashore, the open field, the boat, the mountainside, was still unchanged.

And in almost two thousand years the Master's way is learned of few. How many of us might see the Lord if with busy hands but expectant eyes we waited for him in common, everyday places and employments; in our gardens, on the highway, in the toil of our daily occupation, at our evening meal, and surely at our church prayer-meeting, to comfort, to counsel, to aid, to bless, to inspire.

Read once more the Gospel of St. Luke and, like the Bethany-led disciples, pause to worship, and then return to your Jerusalem with great joy, in quiet, radi-

ant confidence that he is indeed risen and goeth before you.—Louise Manning Hodgkins.

Our Hearts now Burn within Us, while He Speaks to us in the Way. Christ has once more come out from the tomb, very much alive, very real, comforting and strong. Men, thousands of feet up in the air, rushing back to their hangars after a desperate fight, at speed greater than the mind can conceive, say that they are conscious of his presence and that it steadies them and helps them home. He goes into trenches, and men speak to him as they struggle to endure the deadly monotony of long days and nights of mind weariness and soul hunger. They speak quickly to him at the listening post, and he strengthens them; they whisper to him from the hiding places of the signal corps. He walks the deck of the mine-sweeper and is present with the convoy. He does not seem to condemn, he seems to understand—why they have gone into it, the awful cost of it, the glory of it, the temptations, the desperate longing that drives one mad—seems to understand perfectly and to give strength and renewed courage to hold on until the end.

"The effect of emotional strain," say some who read the letters or share the confidences of men who have met him on battle-fronts. High tension, nerves stretched to the breaking-point—the constant association with suffering and death, these things are responsible for their mystical experiences, say others, who think they must explain. It may be that through the emotions, by the path of high tension, by constant familiarity with realities, the revelation comes. The man to whom it has come smiles at the explanation, and goes over the words patiently, as if trying to explain to a child:

"It was the night of the great push, and I was driving the ambulance through a rain of shot and shell, the sky blood-red, the roar deafening. A shell burst, and the ambulance ahead was put out of commission; all killed, you know, *all*. Somehow I got my men through. I had been working eighteen hours without a stop, and it did not seem possible to make the trip over that road into hell again; but it had to be done. All of a sudden, he came as I climbed up into the seat—told me I could do it, that he would go with me. He did. There and back all that night, we went. Call it what you will. I know. Many of the fellows know in different ways what I'm telling you. No man can ever be the same after such an experience. He cleans up."

Any argument seems very meagre, very inadequate, in the presence of the transfigured face of the driver of that ambulance who must walk with a crutch the rest of his days.

He has been long unseen, this Christ, but in these days of darkness men in churches and on battle-fronts, in business houses and in the fight upon the sea, have rediscovered him. He seems to be very much of a man, a companion and a friend, very tender and sympathetic, and very challenging. He seems to be very intolerant of hypocrisy, of sham, of littleness, as he was in Jerusalem long centuries ago. He seems to demand righteous living. He seems to be seeking men for the same purpose he did before, to *help* them and to assure them of the reality of God's unbounded and eternal love for them.—Miss Margaret Slattery, in The Second Line of Defense.

With Christ in Flanders.

"Have you seen him on fields of Flanders
With his brave and tender smile?
Did he ease your load on that shell-swept road
On that last long weary mile?
Did you meet him among your comrades
From far and distant lands?
In the sun's red glare, did you see Christ there
With the heart of France in his hands?

"I have prayed in her fields of poppies,
I have laughed with the men who died—
But in all my ways, and through all my days
Like a friend he walked beside.
I have seen a sight under heaven
That only God understands,
In the battle's glare I have seen Christ there
With the Sword of God in his hands."

The Easter Hope. The regular Easter festival of immortality has had its periodic share in quickening the hope in the heart of humanity. The very thought of the living Christ makes the whole conception of a life beyond seem more reasonable and more possible. And as often as the shadows of mortality fall across our path, and the withered leaves of hope come fluttering to the ground, so often do these ancient words renew their song of triumph in our hearts: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his great mercy, begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."—Rev. J. M. E. Ross, in The First Epistle of Peter.

Because He Lives, We Shall Live Also. Half way up the precipitous ascent of El Capitan, that wall of rock which rises 3,000 feet from the floor of the Yosemite Valley, there grows a pine tree which has attained the height of one hundred and forty feet. I have marvelled at the wondrous power of the life inherent in the seed which could burrow for itself a standing place there and then develop into a giant tree. To Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst that tree suggested a beautiful thought. Let me pass it on to you in his own beautiful words:—

With fingers of exceeding delicacy, but of more than the inflexible penetrativeness of steel, the tree has reached its way quietly but irresistibly into the adamantine fastnesses of the grim pile, and it stands there, submitted to by the rock, smiled upon by the sun, baptized by the rain, a dramatic monument to the sway wielded over the precipice, massive but inert, by what was once but a minute seed-kernel of life, cast there by the wind, dropped there perhaps by a bird—a silent but thrilling eulogy upon the incalculable possibilities of the thing that *lives*. Only a forest tree vigorously endowed with the energies of life would have matched the malignant forces of the Yosemite, strenuously set to work its extinction.

In the duel fought out in the Lord's grave it was not by some act of special gratuitous deliverance that the entombed Spirit was rescued from the captivity of death, but because the containings of that Spirit were not amenable to captivity, "could not be holden of it," were of a sort that the powers of physical corruption could not assert over them their grim imperialism,—existed with a life that was distinctly alien to the empire of decay.

In the instance of the tree growing out of the rocky ledge of El Capitan its continuance was secured to it not by any act of providential interposition, but by the inextinguishable vigor of its own vitality. And quite like that, we may be assured, are the means by which we also are to have our own existence permanently maintained and survive the crisis of that we call death. It is not so much a question whether God will keep us alive, and by special exertion rescue us from an extinction and an oblivion of which we should otherwise be the victims, but whether, quite aside and apart from the body which is destined to corruption, we are possessed of life such that it is in its own nature inextinguishable, inherently eternal. In other words, whether our own spirit has become so possessed, so charged, with the divine Spirit that we simply cannot be blotted out, so long as God lasts; bound up with him in one common bundle of life, able thus to have fulfilled in us those splendid Easter words of our Lord,—"Because I live you are going to live, too."

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The assurance of immortality. See the book with this title by Harry Emerson Fosdick; The last chapter of Everyman's Religion, by Dean Hodges.

2. Living up to our faith in immortality. "We accept the bare fact of immortality. Our hope is that we shall survive death. We are reasonably sure the life goes on and on, beyond the grave. Are we acting as we should expect men to act who believe that, even with feeble and faltering faith?"

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Book of Judges? 2. How long a period does the book probably cover? 3. What is the history that it records? 4. In what sense were the early leaders of the Israelites called Judges? (¶ 8, p. 23, of our Introduction.) 5. Who was the first woman whose aspirations for national leadership are recorded in the Bible? (Num. 12.1-15.) 6. To whom did Deborah ascribe her victory? (Judges 5.20.) 7. Why did she curse Meroz? (Judges 5.23.) 8. What other women have been renowned in battle? 9. What part did women taken in the Great War? 10. Are women adapted to the role of judge either in the ancient or in the modern meaning of the term? 11. What part should women have in national affairs?

DEBORAH AND BARAK DELIVER ISRAEL

Golden Text

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Psalm 46.1

LESSON Judges 2.6-23; 4.4 to 5.31 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 46

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Judges 4.3-1; Hebrews 11. 32, 33

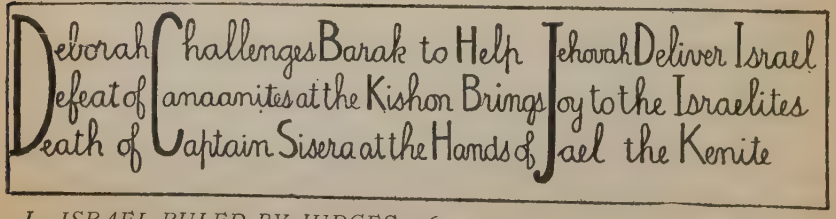
JUDGES 4.4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. 5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, *saying,* Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand. 8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh; and there went up ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, even from the children of Hobab the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh.

12 And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. 13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon. 14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not Jehovah gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. 15 And Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet. 16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


Deborah Challenges Barak to Help Jehovah Deliver Israel
Defeat of Canaanites at the Kishon Brings Joy to the Israelites
Death of Captain Sisera at the Hands of Jael the Kenite

I. ISRAEL RULED BY JUDGES, 2.6-23.

II. DEBORAH'S CHALLENGE TO BARAK, 4.4-10. *Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, judged Israel at that time.* The word "Deborah" means "Bee"; Matthew Henry says she answered to her name by her industry, sagacity, and great usefulness to the public, her sweetness to her friends and sharpness to her enemies. *She dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah be-*

Edwin Austin Abbey, R.A.

THEN SANG DEBORAH

Judges 5.1.

tween Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. She sat under the tree (therefore known as the palm-tree of Deborah) as judge, probably not so often to settle disputes between men as to declare what was the judgment of God in national affairs. On a coin of the Roman Empire, Judea is represented as a woman seated under a palm-tree, captive and weeping. "It is the contrast of that figure which will best place before us the character and calling of Deborah. It is the same Judean palm, under whose shadow she sits, but not with downcast eyes, and folded hands, and extinguished hopes; with all the fire of faith and energy, eager for the battle, confident of the victory" (Stanley).

Coin Representing the Capture of Jerusalem

With faith in God's directing hand such as empowered Joan of Arc for her task, Deborah summoned Barak, and *said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw unto Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?* Compare Judges 5.8. Only the men of the two tribes are mentioned here who were the most interested in defeating the oppressors because their territory bordered the Plain of Esdraelon. See the Geographical Background. *And I*—God, in whose name Deborah is speaking—*will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitudes; and I will deliver him unto thy hand.*

But Barak was not brave enough to stand alone. *If thou wilt go with me, then I will go,* he told Deborah; *but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.* How much greater was Moses in his memorable words to Jehovah, "If *thy* presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Ex. 33.15. Deborah yielded, and promised to go with Barak, but warned him that the honor of the battle would not be his: *for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.* Sisera was killed by Jael, a woman (verses 17-22), but Deborah's words seem rather to apply to herself; she, not Barak, would be given the honor of the day's victory. Deborah went to Kedesh where Barak summoned the ten thousand to follow him, and then the two led them up to Mount Tabor, whose flat summit or whose sloping side was an excellent camping ground, whence they could observe the movement of the enemy and charge down upon them in the plain below.

III. DEBORAH AND BARAK DEFEAT SISERA, 4.11-16. Verse 11 is parenthetical. It explains how it happened that the family to which Jael belonged, Jael who actually killed Sisera, verses 17-22, happened to be in the north instead of with the tribes of Judah and Simeon on the highlands of central and southern Judea. They had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of the Kenite, Moses' brother-in-law, and had located near Kedesh the home of Barak.

When Sisera learned that *Barak was gone up to Mount Tabor,* he *gathered all his chariots and all the people* and went to the River Kishon. See the Geographical Background. *Up,* said Deborah to Barak, *for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand.* "Josephus says that when Barak saw Sisera's army drawn up, and attempting to surround the mountain on the top of which he and his forces lay encamped, his heart quite failed him, and he determined to retire to a place of greater safety; but Deborah animated him to make a descent upon Sisera, assuring him that this was the day marked out in the divine counsels for his defeat. 'Now they appear most threatening when they are ripe for ruin. The thing is as sure to be done as if it were done already: the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand'" (Henry). I wonder if it may not have been from these words of Deborah that the Germans originally took their slogan, *Der Tag,* The Day? *Is not Jehovah gone out before thee?* Thus Deborah continued to encourage Barak. If God be for us, who can be against us? asked Paul.

So Barak went down from Mount Tabor and ten thousand men after him, and Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak. "The stars fought against Sisera, the river Kishon swept them away," cried Deborah in her song of Triumph. Compare Miriam's

refrain at the Red Sea: "Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Sisera went on foot northward to Kedesh, while Barak pursued the charioteers in their flight westward. *And all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.*

IV. JAEL KILLS SISERA, 4.17-22.

V. GOD'S HAND IN THE VICTORY, 4.23, 24.

VI. DEBORAH'S SONG OF VICTORY, Chapter V. This is the poetic account, as Chapter IV is the prose account, of the defeat of the Canaanites under Deborah and Barak. It is the oldest war-ode preserved in the Bible. Deborah glories in savage glee over Sisera's death at the hands of Jael:—

"At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
At her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

But no vengeful joy merged with her joy in giving to God the victory:—

"So let thine enemies perish, O Jehovah:
But let them that love him be as the sun
when he goeth forth in the night."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Now Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel at that time, 4.4. Many changes occurred in the position of woman during the centuries covered by the Bible. Dr. Ismar J. Peritz thus summarizes them:

"There are traces of the existence in ancient Israel of the matriarchate, when the woman is the head of the family, and descent is reckoned by her. There are traces of the custom of marriage by capture; of marriage by purchase, with all the attendant consequences of woman's subject condition. Among the priestly class and in ritual legislation woman's position is inferior. She not only cannot be a priestess, but she is considered ceremonially defiling. This culminates eventually in Judaism in the entire exclusion of woman from worship; and the Talmudic Jew thanks his Creator in his every morning's prayer that he has not made him a woman. But among the prophets woman is more the equal of man, appearing as leader side by side with him in home, church and state; and in the teachings of Jesus she comes fully to her own."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What history did our First Quarter's lessons of last year cover? What led the children of Israel to leave Egypt? Under whose leadership? How long afterward did they enter the Promised Land? Why were they so long on the way? Under whose leadership did they finally enter Canaan?

Before the Time of the Judges. In the early stories of Genesis we are told how God created the world and how he guided mankind: how suffering followed sin, but God turned the sin to his purpose: these are the stories of the creation, of the temptation and fall in Eden, of the murder of Abel by Cain, of the universal corruption of men, the flood, and the preservation of Noah and his family, of the building of the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues.

With the journey of Abraham from Ur of Chaldea up the Euphrates Valley and then across the Jordan River and into the land of Canaan, the land promised to him and his descendants, the history of the Chosen People begins. This was about 2000 B. C., or about as many years before Christ as our time is after Christ. The Patriarchal History narrates God's dealings with the founders of the Hebrew nation—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Abraham lived in such constant communion with God that he gained the beautiful name of "the Friend of God"—the name by which he is called to this day by both Jews and Moslems. Isaac the Peaceloving; Jacob, at first the Crafty, but after the wrestling with God at the brook Jabbok, the Prince with God; Joseph the Noble-hearted—what visions of God's guiding hand do these names recall! Jacob had twelve sons, the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. His brothers envied Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt; he was taken into Potiphar's house and thence to prison; and after his interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was made second unto the Pharaoh in the realm. A great famine drove the brothers to

Egypt to buy grain, and eventually Jacob, the aged father, and all the brothers settled in Egypt.

Years passed and there sat on the throne of Egypt a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, who made the Israelites slaves and oppressed them grievously. Then Moses became their leader, and changed the slaves into freemen. He led them out of Egypt. You recall the crossing of the Red Sea, the forty years of life in the wilderness, and the giving of a new religion at Mount Sinai.

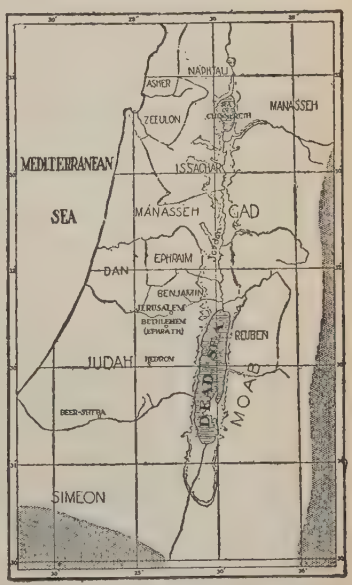
Of the original number who left Egypt only two entered Canaan, Joshua and Caleb. Joshua led the people across the Jordan, captured Jericho, and divided the land of Canaan among the children of Israel.

The First Judges of Israel. Joshua's conquest of Canaan was incomplete, and many cities remained in the possession of the original inhabitants. There was no federation of the tribes against their common enemies within and round about. It was a rude, rough age, "Israel's Iron Age," as Dr. Marcus Dods aptly terms it. Several times a powerful enemy threatened to annihilate the Israelites but each time, as the record says, "Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them." Heroic Othniel, Caleb's younger brother, freed them from the King of Mesopotamia; left-handed Ehud delivered them from the King of Moab; and mighty Shamgar saved them from the Philistines.

The Conflict with the Canaanites. A great crisis now came. Jabin, king of the Northern Confederacy of the Canaanites, through Sisera, his commander-in-chief, had held for twenty years a military despotism over the northern districts of Canaan. His power might have grown till he had regained the whole land and sealed Israel's doom. Deborah, the judge, recognized the gravity of the situation. How she trusted in God's help, how she summoned Barak to fight the enemy, how he mustered his troops and how the battle went, how Sisera perished, and how Deborah exulted in song, our lesson tells.

The Book of Judges. See pages 23-26 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND



North and south across Palestine west of the Jordan extends its backbone, the central tableland. North of Carmel and extending southeasterly to the Jordan the *Plain of Esdraelon* cuts across this tableland and separated the southern tribes of Israel from the northern tribes.

Although the only tribes mentioned in the prose account as taking part in the combat against the Canaanites are *Zebulun* and *Naphtali,* the tribes bordering the plain on the north, yet the poetic account (Judges 5) mentions all the others (save Judah and Simeon in the far south) as either uniting with the two northern tribes or as refusing to come to their help in a united action of all the tribes. Notice that the temperature of the zeal of the different portions of the nation can be traced, as Dean Stanley says, almost in proportion to their nearness to the center of the agitation. The main support was naturally derived from the northern tribes who were the chief sufferers from the oppressor. But the leaders in this contest came from the two ends of Israel, Deborah from Mount Ephraim on the south and Barak from Kedesh on the north.

Deborah's home was between *Ramah* and *Bethel,* towns which were not far north of Jebus, ancient Jerusalem. Barak's home was at *Kedesh-Naphtali;* that is, Kedesh in the territory of the tribe of Naphtali. The word *Kedesh* means a *shrine.*

Esdraelon is "a vast theater with its clearly-defined stage, with its proper

exits and entrances." The latter are five in number: the pass of the Kishon at its apex, the glen by Mount Tabor on the northeast, the Valley of Jezreel on the southeast, and the Plain of Dothan and the approach to Megiddo on the south. See the map on page 173.

Harosheth of the Gentiles is on the pass leading from the plain by the Sea into the Plain of Esdraelon. Harosheth was Sisera's entrance, but he was unable to make it his exit.

Mount Tabor

The *Kishon* River flows northwesterly through the Plain into the Sea. It is usually dry in summer and I have crossed it almost without realizing its existence, but in the rainy season it is a rapid torrent, seldom restrained by its mud banks.

(Let pupils sketch the Plain of Esdraelon and locate the places mentioned in the lesson. Or the outline of the map here given may be hectographed and on the copies pupils may draw the river, and locate Harosheth and the mountains. If your pupils have copies of In the Master's Country (George H. Doran Company, fifty cents) let them learn ¶s 35, 36, p. 7, and complete the outline map No. 5 on p. 35.)

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Deborah had enthusiasm and zeal, but she could not have freed Israel without Barak. Barak was the man of action, but without Deborah to arouse him, he would have done nothing whatever for Israel. Your enthusiasm and zeal for the right are invaluable, they kindle a like enthusiasm in your pupils, and your knowledge of what your pupils can do and should do is also invaluable, in directing their enthusiasm and zeal to definite good ends.

If teachers of young pupils can imbue them with the thought of God in connection with all the experiences of life, their whole after lives will be molded thereby. A deep sense of God and a high faith in his love and care give a wonderful courage to meet the troubles of life.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A STORY OF A HERO AND A HEROINE (DEBORAH AND BARAK)

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. This is a story of a battle for freedom, of how it was fought and won. (Make the story vividly real. Tell how the Israelites suffered from their enemies the Canaanites, how Deborah asked God to help them and believed that God would help them, how she made Barak brave enough to gather an army and fight. Picture Deborah and Barak looking eagerly down upon the Plain below from the summit of Mount Tabor, and tell what they said when they saw the Canaanites approaching in their chariots. Briefly describe the attack, the sinking of the chariot wheels in the mud, the flight of the enemy, the victory. Call for the Golden Text and talk about it. Teach your pupils that when they are in trouble it is good to tell God about it in prayer. No matter how small the trouble, God wants them to tell him about it, and he always listens. Prayer always helps. Prayer gives courage, as it gave courage to Deborah and Barak. But like these two, we must do what we can to help answer our prayers. God did not deliver the Israelites out of their trouble without anything being done by the Israelites themselves.)

Who Can Save a Nation? In a speech delivered in England a dozen years ago, Sir John Benn told this story: "An old Roman, who was deeply concerned in the welfare of his beloved city, dreamed that he saw a great army of Roman citizens marching past him. In front were many old men carrying a banner inscribed, 'We have been brave.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'but they are old and grey now, and Rome cannot rely on them for her future.' Then came a younger

body of men, with a banner, 'We are brave.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'but they will soon be old, and Rome cannot rely on them for her future.' But at last there came a great crowd of boys crying out, 'We will be brave.' Then the old man's heart was gladdened. He felt satisfied that with the boys determined to be brave the future welfare of Rome was secured."

Then Sir John Benn added, "So it is our Christian boys and girls who must make the future of Britain secure." And it *was* those very boys and girls growing to young manhood and womanhood who were heroes and heroines in the Great War, and who, with others like them from France and Italy and the United States, made secure the future of Britain and of the civilized world.

The Heroism that is Possible for Everyone. Perhaps some of you would like to be a hero, or heroine—to do some great thing that would make you famous, that the world would admire. Such an opportunity may come to some of you. But there are just two things I would like to say about heroism. The first is that *true heroism is possible even in little things.* The child who willingly gives up a much-loved toy to another, or the boy or girl who cheerfully gives up an afternoon's pleasure in order to help another, may be a little hero—for sacrifice lies at the very root of heroism. And certainly that is a very noble type of heroism which will face ridicule and scorn rather than do a mean or wrong thing. So you may all be heroes, even though you may never be called upon to perform any wondrous feat.

The other thing I should like to say is, that in ordinary life heroes are only wanted occasionally, but *plodders are needed every day,* and there is heroism in steady work, in patience and perseverance over sometimes disagreeable tasks. You know the proverb: "All that glitters is not gold." It is not always the most showy work that is the most important, nor is the showy boy or girl the one who is most valued by other people.—The Christian.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Joshua 1.9.

Boys, dedicate your brave young lives to the chivalry of justice rather than of romance.—Frances Willard.

Girls, womanliness first; afterward, what you will.—Frances Willard.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does *vaunt themselves,* verse 2, mean? 2. Tell the story of Gideon's midnight visit to the enemy's camp. (Verses 9-15.) 3. When the Midianites were suddenly awakened by the noise and light, what must they have thought? 4. Read the story of the spies who went to spy out the land of Canaan when the Israelites were in the wilderness and tell why ten of them brought back a discouraging report, and why two of them said "We are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13.17-14.10.)

Note-Book Work. Begin a new Note-Book entitled The Early Leaders and Kings of Israel. Today write I. The title of the lesson; two statements about Deborah; a statement about Barak; a thought for you from the lesson.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: FIGHTING ON GOD'S SIDE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "God Almighty has been too much for me!" exclaimed Napoleon when on that memorable retreat from Moscow he was beaten and the greater part of his army destroyed, not by Russia's soldiers, but by the blinding snowstorm and the bitter cold. He had not calculated upon winter's coming so much earlier than usual, and he saw in that circumstance the hand of God against him. Our lesson tells how "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," how God Almighty discomfited him, and helped the Israelites. Who was Sisera?

Some Important Things which the Story Shows. It shows us the *power of individuals.* Is a nation to be oppressed? Is it to be weak? Is it to be unrighteous? It all depends upon individuals—whether there is a Deborah or a Barak in it. If it has no such people, it will go on sinning and suffering, the prey of the tyrant. But if they are there, it will rise up, fling off the chains and be strong and free. The fate of a nation depends on the great souls that rise up to lead it. If there had been no Washington or Lincoln, what would have happened to America? If there had been no Oliver Cromwell or Pitt, what would have happened to Britain? These countries were saved and made great by these great men. Here is something for you to think about and dream about—all the

great leaders were once boys and girls, and they kept on growing, living, doing their duty till their time came.

It shows us *the power of a call.* Barak had gifts and was a soldier, but he did nothing. The nation was oppressed and the condition of the people grew worse and worse, yet Barak did nothing. Men must have watched him and have waited for his word, but he did nothing. He needed a call, some one to arouse him and set him going. And it came to him. When once aroused he showed himself a strong leader and liberator. Calls have a way of transforming people. Often men and women seem to be quite ordinary people, easy-going, indifferent, until something inspires them, calls them into action, and then they surprise the world with genius and capability. The men who won the Great War were average men until the call came and they turned out to be great heroes. You will get a call some day, something that will thrill your heart and bid you be up and doing. Do not pass it by.

It shows us the *power of womanhood.* Deborah was a prophetess. She lived near to God and therefore her power was very great. She had power with the people. They brought their troubles and problems to her and she kept them in the right way. But she had a greater power than this, power to stir a great man to action, to make him strike a blow for the freedom of the nation. One day you girls will have to play a part in the life of our nation and in the life of men. What sort of part is it going to be? You will have influence and power, but of what kind? Live near to God, and your influence will be true and noble.

In the Name of God. Julia Ward Howe, in her devout hymn "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord," furnishes an exact modern parallel to Deborah's song. The ancient prophetess was overwhelmed with shame and grief to see her elect people crushed by a cruel despotism; she saw also the secret of the degradation of Israel in their choice of "new gods"; and she called upon the prostrate nation, punished for its sin, to become once more faithful to him who was the source of their glory, and who alone could be their defense. She rallied the cowed host in the name of God, in the cause of righteousness, in the promise of victory and liberty.

Every war on which men can confidently solicit the blessing of God must be a spiritual war, that is, a war against oppression and wrong; a struggle for truth, justice, humanity, and peace based on righteousness. The soul of a noble individual, or of a noble nation, revolts from the tyranny of brute power; he, or it, must enjoy freedom or perish. "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." Is that what we are looking for? Is that our pure desire? Not *our* glory, but *his?* Is this our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing?—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

On the Side of God. When a visitor at the White House in the dark days of the Civil War expressed to the President the hope that God was on their side, Lincoln replied gravely, "I am more concerned about our being on God's side."

God Fights on the Side of Justice and Right. When the Spanish Armada set sail for England, its object was the destruction of England's liberties and the uprooting of England's religion. It was the mightiest fleet the world had ever seen when it sailed proudly out of the harbors of Spain. There were a hundred and thirty mighty vessels in it, while to oppose it England could collect together only eighty vessels—scarcely thirty of which were ships of the line. The disparity was ridiculous, absurd. Indeed, so conscious were the Spaniards of their superior strength that they called their fleet in advance, "the Invincible Armada." When it appeared off the Lizard it stretched in the shape of a half-moon for seven miles across the sea.

Every one knows that it was not Howard and Drake who finally destroyed the Armada. When Howard and Drake fell back for lack of ammunition, Nature seemed to take up their work. As the fleeing ships tried to make their way round by the North of Scotland, wind and sea took up the work of destruction. On many a rocky island in Scotland, on many a cape on the West of Ireland those great galleons of Spain went crashing to their doom. Out of the one hundred and thirty ships that set sail, only fifty-four battered vessels made their way back, and it was not Drake's daring or Howard's fire-ships that had wrought the destruction. Wind and wave had done it. English folk verily believed that Nature had helped them in the fight. "Deus flavit," so ran the inscription on the medal which Elizabeth struck to commemorate the mighty deliverance, "et dissipati sunt"—"God blew upon them and they were scattered."

Of course, the modern man will say that these interventions of Nature's forces on the side of what we believe to have been justice and right were mere coincidences and nothing more. And yet I am not sure that our fathers, who with a simpler faith saw the hand of God in all these things, were not nearer the truth. "He maketh the winds his messengers," says one of the psalmists, "his ministers a flame of fire." "Fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind," says another, "fulfilling his word." And I find no difficulty myself in believing that God Almighty—who is in all and through all and over all, and without whom nothing happens—used these natural agencies (which are his ministers) to overthrow the oppressor and to defend the right.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

Fighting on the Lord's Side in the Great War. The former Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany seldom uttered a remark about the war in which he did not claim that God was on his side. In truth, "he coupled God with himself as an equal, an abettor, or perchance a servant." He never gave a thought to the question whether or not he were on the Lord's side. In the great crisis God raised up General Foch, "the man who fought on the side of Christ." "This has been Christ's war," says the New York Times. "Christ on one side, and all that stood opposed to Christ on the other side. And the Generalissimo in supreme command of all the armies that fought on the side of Christ, is Christ's man."

The editorial in this great daily, written before the end of the war, furthermore said: "It seems to be beyond all shadow of doubt that when the hour came in which all Christ stood for was to either stand or fall, Christ raised up a man to lead the hosts that battled for him. When the hour came in which truth and right, charity, brotherly love, justice and liberty were either to triumph or to be blotted out of the world, Christ came again. When the war is ended a crowd of critics will attempt to explain the genius of Foch with maps and diagrams. But, while they are doing so, if you will look for Foch in some quiet church, it is there that he will be found humbly giving God the glory, and absolutely declining to attribute it to himself.

"General Foch never fails to spend an hour on his knees every morning that he awakens from sleep; and another hour every night. He has done this his whole life long. Men who do that which Foch does have no doubts. When Premier Clemenceau, the old Tiger of France, stood on the battle-front with anxious heart, one look at the face of Foch stilled all fears. He returned to France with the vision of sure and certain victory. The great agnostic statesman doubted, but the Gray Man of Christ did not doubt."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. It has pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe signal victories; let us acknowledge and render thanks to our Heavenly Father for these inestimable blessings.—Lincoln.

Let us recognize the sublime truth that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.—Lincoln.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did the period of the Judges compare with life today? 2. What are some of the lessons which the stories of the Book have for us? 3. What was the condition in Israel during the oppression of the Midianites? (Judges 6.1-6.) 4. Why was Gideon called Jerubbaal? (Judges 6.28-32.) 5. What qualities must the three hundred have possessed? 6. Tell the story of Gideon's midnight visit to the camp of the enemy. 7. Describe the location of the two opposing camps, the course taken by the Midianites in their flight, the place where they were met by the Ephraimites, and the place where Gideon overtook them and captured the kings.

Note-Book Work. Begin a new Note-Book entitled The Early Leaders and Kings of Israel. Today write I. Deborah the Judge of Israel.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE SERVICE OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. See the Historical Background.

Deborah as a National Leader. This is the first example we have of a woman occupying the ruler's place. Miriam, like Deborah, was a prophetess, but when Miriam aspired to have some share in national affairs, she was punished for her presumption. At that time the Israelites had in Moses a far

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greater leader than Miriam could have been, whereas Deborah, by sheer force of character, became the acknowledged head of the tribes because she was greater than any man of her time. It was due to her genius and courage that something like national action by all the tribes was undertaken. Barak, whom she selected to be the commander-in-chief of the armies, refused the position, leaving that place to her, and taking himself the subordinate one of general. Barak was far inferior to her in courage, initiative, independence, contagious ardor, and faith. He would not have undertaken to carry out her plans alone. "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go," he said; "but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." He assembled his forces, but waited for Deborah to tell him when the time had come to strike the blow. "Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand," commanded Deborah, and then Barak went to the attack. It was Deborah who made the plans for the campaign, who inspired the army with courage, whose personal presence led the venture to a successful issue. Hers was a heroic personality, but she was strengthened for her task by her great faith in God, and to God she gave the victory. Her Song of Triumph expresses a passionate love not only for Israel, but also for Jehovah, Israel's God. (See ¶ 3, p. 26.)

The Maid of Orleans, Another Deborah. Joan of Arc was a frail girl, and yet she led the armies of France for years against the English, and was overcome finally only through treachery. In the following account of her generalship, I have condensed a chapter from "Historical Tales":

Joan of Arc was born at a critical period in history. Her country was in extremity. For the greater part of a century the dreadful "Hundred Years' War" had been waged, desolating France, destroying its people by thousands, bringing it more and more under the dominion of a foreign foe. The realm of France had now reached its lowest depth of disaster, its king uncrowned, its fairest regions overrun,—here by the English, there by the Burgundians,—the whole kingdom in peril of being taken and reduced to vassalage. The deliverer chosen of heaven was the young peasant girl at Domremy. Doubtless little Joan's soul burned with sympathy for her beloved land, asking herself if God could longer permit such wrongs and disasters to continue. Again and again came to her voices; they haunted her; and still the burden of their exhortation was the same, that she should "go to France to deliver the kingdom." It was her enthusiastic belief in her divine mission that moved Joan of Arc. It was trust in her as God's agent of deliverance that filled the soul of France with new spirit, and unnerved her foes with superstitious fears.

Charles decided that The Maid should go to Orleans. A suit of armor was made to fit her. She was given the following of a war-chief. At length, on the 27th of April, the march to Orleans began.

What succeeded we may tell briefly. Inspired by the intrepid Maid, the besieged boldly attacked the British forts, and took them one after another. The English would not face her in open field, and under her leadership the French intrepidly stormed their ramparts. Joan pressed on; the English retreated; the bastille was taken without another blow. Back to Orleans marched the triumphant Maid, the people wild with joy. All through the night the bells rang out glad peals and the *Te Deum* was chanted. Much reason had they for joy; Orleans was saved. The Maid had fulfilled her mission. France was saved.

History contains no instance to match this. A year before, Joan of Arc, a low-born peasant girl, had occupied herself in tenting sheep and spinning flax; her hours of leisure being given to dreams and visions. Now, clad in armor and at the head of an army, she was gazing in triumph on the flight of a hostile army, driven from its seemingly assured prey by her courage, intrepidity, and enthusiasm, while veteran soldiers obeyed her commands, experienced leaders yielded to her judgment. Never had the world seen its like. The Maid of Orleans had made her name immortal.

Frances Willard. "One Sunday evening in a Western farmhouse a plain farmer was teaching his little girl Charles Wesley's hymn, 'A charge to keep I have.' When they came to the verse:

'To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill,—
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will,'

the godly farmer told his little daughter that the Creator had brought her into the world in order that she might fulfil that verse. The child believed it. Thenceforth that was her understanding of what she was born for. And because that verse took possession of that little girl and started her on a great career, Frances E. Willard stands in perpetual marble in Statuary Hall in the Capitol at Washington, the one woman whose statue has a place under the dome in the nation's Hall of Fame."

Lady Henry Somerset's praise of Frances Willard—"Remarkable as a speaker, excellent as a writer, with a genius for organization, perhaps Miss Willard's rarest gift is the power of inspiring others with a belief in what they can accomplish"—attributes to her the very qualities that Deborah possessed in such marked degree.

The Russian Deborah. Mme. Leona Botchkavera, the Russian woman who organized and led the famous "Woman's Battalion of Death" in the days when Russia fought with the Allies, I may well call the Russian Deborah. Unlike Deborah, she cannot compose a song, for she can neither read nor write, but like Deborah she was the magnetic leader in battle of an invincible band. Those women under her leadership went over the top and into the German trenches, killed Germans and took them prisoners—some of the prisoners, it is said, committing suicide for shame at being taken by a woman. Among the many rules which the Battalion observed are those which were Deborah's in practice: "Iron discipline; firmness and steadfastness of spirit and purpose; bravery and recklessness."

Commander Evangeline Booth's Orders. In talking about the work of the Salvation Army in France during the War, Commander Booth said: "When officers were sent overseas I always talked about their prospective work with them. And I always said, as I wished them good-by and Godspeed, "Die for our soldiers as willingly as they would die for you!" And they always answered, "We will!"

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. "A woman to be a judge when womanly qualities are least of all judicial!" exclaims a lesson writer: is he correct in his estimate of women?

2. Do you agree with the following? "It has been right for women to do men's work during this War, and it may be right again, but it is to be regarded as a temporary expedient. Some tasks have been mistakenly reserved for men, such as medicine and surgery. There is an area of debatable ground which has yet to be appropriated between the sexes. But broadly speaking, no woman should remain at a man's task, when men are clearly marked out to do it. It is equally clear that no man should remain at tasks which are specifically woman's."

Or have those words from The World's Evangelical Alliance your approval? "Woman has gone over the parapet. She has left for ever the protections and limitations of her shielded life. New powers are being placed in her hands, new perils are around her feet. Womanhood needs our prayers, for there is no turning back from the path on which she has entered."

See My Experience with Women in Men's Jobs, American Magazine, July, 1918; The Changed Attitude toward Women in Great Britain, The Christian Work, Jan. 4, 1919.

3. Women of National Prominence Today. See France's Fighting Woman Doctor, in The Day of Glory, by Dorothy Canfield.

4. The rise of women leaders in the Orient.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Describe the times of the Judges. (Page 24 of our Introduction.) 2. Give a general outline of the Book of Judges. 3. What two literary gems does the book contain? 4. What lessons for us has the book? 5. What was the first step in Gideon's rise from a simple farmer to be the judge of Israel? (Judges 6.25-27.) 6. Why was the test, verse 7, made? 7. How did Cromwell choose his famous regiment? 8. What qualities for leadership did Gideon possess? 9. What is said in Ps. 83.9-14 about this destruction of the Midianites? 10. How does Isaiah in 9.4 describe deliverance from the hand of an oppressor? 11. On what occasion did Moses tell the people that God would fight for them? (Ex. 14.13, 14.)

THE VICTORY OF GIDEON'S BAND

Golden Text

There is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. 1 Samuel 14.6

LESSON Judges 7 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 47

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Judges 6.1-40; 8.1-35

JUDGES 7.1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

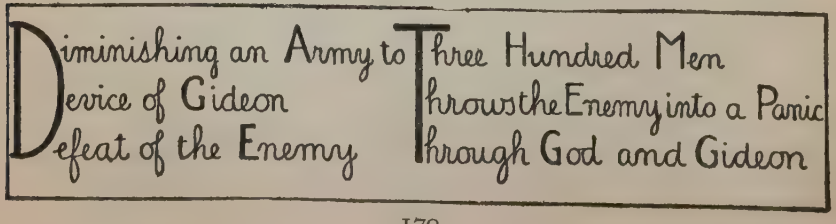
4 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place. 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the three hundred men: and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put *them* to flight.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


Diminishing an Army to Three Hundred Men
Device of Gideon
Defeat of the Enemy
Throws the Enemy into a Panic
through God and Gideon

I. RIVAL CAMPS, verse 1. We come now to another oppression of the Israelites, this time by the Midianites. *Then,* when it had become unbearable, *Jerubbaal, who is Gideon* (for the explanation of the name *Jerubbaal* see Judges 6.28-32, and for the situation read chapter 6 and the Historical Background) *and all the people with him, rose up early and encamped beside the spring of Harod.* Opposite them was the camp of Midian: see the Geographical Background.

II. THE REDUCTION OF GIDEON'S ARMY TO THREE HUNDRED VALIANT MEN, verses 2-8. The army of the Israelites was so large, that after the victory over the enemy they might brag of having accomplished it themselves, whereas they were fighting under God's banner and to him must be given the victory. Therefore Gideon issued this proclamation: *Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.* And more than two-thirds of the men took their departure. When God needs men for his work he chooses the hearts courageous. There are many in the Church today, a minister affirms, who when the bugle sounds its martial note suddenly remember an engagement in the opposite direction. *Gilead* is east of the Jordan and it is believed that *Gilboa* is meant. See the Geographical Background.

And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many. "The number of God's army looked well, but God took to auditing it; he audited the figures, and a most savage audit it was" (McNeill). Gideon brought his men down to the water and there tested them further. Dr. George Adam Smith, in his Historical Geography, explains that any one "who has looked across the scene can appreciate the suitability of the test which Gideon imposed on his men. The stream, which makes it possible for the occupiers of the hill to hold also the well against an enemy on the plain, forbids them to be careless in their use of the water; for they drink in the face of that enemy, and the reeds and shrubs which mark its course afford ample cover for hostile ambushes. Those Israelites, therefore who bowed themselves down on their knees, drinking headlong, did not appreciate their position or the foe; whereas those who merely crouched, lapped up the water with one hand, while they held their weapons in the other and kept their face to the enemy, were aware of their danger, and had hearts ready against all surprise. The test in fact was a test of attitude, which, after all, both in physical and moral warfare, has proved of greater value than strength or skill—attitude towards the foe and appreciation of his presence. In this case it was particularly suitable. What Gideon had in view was a night march and a sudden surprise of a great host—tactics that might be spoiled by a few careless men. Soldiers who behaved at the water as did the three hundred, showed just the common-sense and vigilance to render such tactics successful." Jewish tradition ascribes another reason for the choice of the three hundred: the followers of Baal were wont to kneel in their idolatrous worship and those who knelt at the river thus betrayed that they were Baal Worshippers. *And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you.* There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few, 1 S. 14.6. "There is a moment in every great war when the bravest troops feel inclined to run; it is the want of confidence in their own courage," declared Napoleon. "The supreme art of generalship is to know just when that moment will come and to provide for it. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I anticipated the moment of fright and flight, and I had twenty-five men ready of cool nerve and decision, and just at the appropriate moment I turned the twenty-five unto the host, and the battle was won."

III. RECONNOITERING IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP, verses 9-15. The same night on which the three hundred had been chosen, the Lord said to Gideon: *Arise, get thee down into the camp of the Midianites, for I have delivered it into thy hand.* It was the supreme moment: a rush, with the hand of God upon him, and victory had been Gideon's in half an hour. But, whether Gideon faltered at the call, or God knew that the man needed some further inspiration and faith, he added: *But if thou fear to go down,* that is with the whole band upon the full venture, *go* first *thou with Phurah thy servant,* and reconnoiter; *and thou shalt hear what they say, and afterward shall thy hands be strengthened to go down* with three hundred *into the camp.* "I suppose there never yet was a common soldier of God, who did not have to pass through the same train of experiences: when at one hour he felt the hand of God upon him in the conviction of immediate victory, and the next was groping his uncertain

way towards a preliminary understanding of the situation on which God had called him to act. Gideon's preliminary miracle comes surely to all: the inspiration of God's word in our hearts, the conviction that the great hope is within reach, or that moral victory and peace are immediately possible. But this never excludes the need of a knowledge of the situation; the use of means; the going down upon painful and, it may be, perilous tasks, when in the darkness all the sense of your frailty comes upon you, and in spite of God's voice, so strong a few hours back, you feel your mission or your character hanging on things as trifling as the breaking twigs and flickering flames at which Gideon checked his breath that night on Esdraelon. Victory is certain; but you have got the situation to learn; you have got the enemy to understand; you have got the slow hard work of a scout to do, before you can lead the forces you feel behind you to their promised triumph"(Dr. George Adam Smith).

IV. ROUTING THE ENEMY BY A SINGULAR METHOD, verses 15-22. Having heard in the camp of Midian *the telling of the dream and the interpretation thereof,* which was that into Gideon's hand *God hath delivered Midian,* Gideon aroused his three hundred to action. He divided them *into three companies,* and doubtless approached the enemy from three sides and thus apparently surrounded them, verses 18 and 21. The enemy *had but newly set the watch,* the guards who kept the middle watch went on duty at ten o'clock, when the little company reached *the outermost part of the camp,* and following Gideon's example as he had directed, the *men blew the trumpets and brake the pitchers* in which they had concealed their lighted torches (see Light from Oriental Life), and to the din of their trumpets they added the shout of *The Sword of Jehovah and of Gideon.* "To know that we are in harmony with the divine purpose is more than half the battle." "The Lord comes to the help of those who are willing to fight, and makes victory crown their banners: he does not come to the help of those who trust in him to do the fighting for them."

And all the host ran. "Midian, but half awake, staggers from her tents. Crash on crash! Trumpets blaring! Torches flashing, in front, at rear, right and left! The weird war-cry! The darkness! The confusion! Has not the dream come true? Is not the foe overwhelming? Does not Jehovah fight for them"(Matthews). *And Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow.* The dazed Midianites, suddenly aroused from a deep sleep, thought themselves surrounded, and not knowing friend from foe, they turned against one another.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A cake of barley bread, verse 13. Barley is the universal food in Palestine of horses and asses, and sometimes also of draught oxen. Straw is chopped for hay, and the corn winnowed and given separately. Oats are unknown, being a grain confined to much colder climates. But barley is also largely consumed as an article of human food. At least half the bread eaten by the poor is of barley. See 2 Ch. 2.10, where equal parts of wheat and barley are allotted to the artificers at the temple. But it is considered a proof of poverty and hardship to be compelled to live on barley bread, which, as all those who have eaten it for any time know, is much inferior in nutritive qualities to wheaten. Gideon's family were poor in Manasseh and he the least in his father's house. The Midianite invader, like any proud Bedouin today, would call the despised Israelite who tilled the soil "a barley cake."—H. B. Tristam, in Natural History of the Bible.

Torches within the pitchers, verse 16. There is a kind of torch used by the police of Cairo, called a "shealeh," which may throw some light upon the means employed by Gideon and his three hundred men to terrify the Midianites and overthrow them. It burns without a flame, except when waved through the air, which causes it at once to burst into a blaze. Its burning end is carried in a small earthen jar, or pitcher, and it thus answers the purpose of a dark lantern; but experienced thieves are set upon their guard by the small light which it emits.—Van Lennep, in Bible Lands.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What conquest had the Israelites won in the Plain of Esdraelon? Who was then the judge? Which two

tribes bore the brunt of battle? How had God helped in this victory? Where were the Israelites when Moses told them that God would fight for them against the Egyptians?

A Time of Peace. The battle on the Plain of Esdraelon, which Barak led against Sisera, was followed by many years of peace. The Israelites cultivated wheat and barley in the Plain, which has always been very fertile, and raised sheep and oxen. Meanwhile, living on friendly terms with the people of the land, they learned other things from them besides how better to live. They learned an evil thing, to build altars to the gods of these Canaanites, the gods which they called the Baalim, and to worship them, for the Canaanites said that it was Baal who sent the sun and the rain for their crops, and therefore they must worship him.

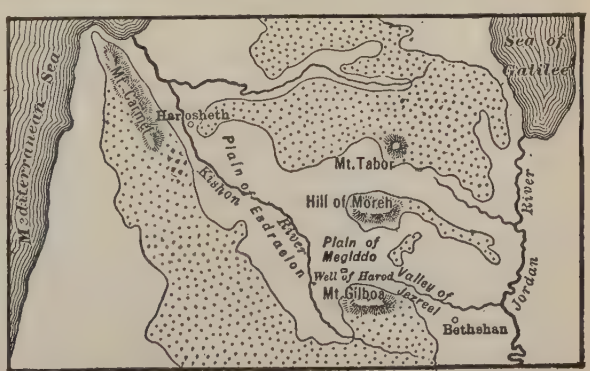
The Midianite Oppression. The Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East were the people who lived on the high plateau east of the Jordan. They saw their opportunity. The Israelites were disunited and weak, given over to evil practices, and these Eastern Bedouins began to make raids upon the crops in the Plain of Esdraelon. Then they crossed the Jordan with their tents and their cattle, "as locusts for multitude," and overran the Plain. Year after year at the time of harvest they did this, each time pushing their forays farther and farther up into the adjacent hill country.

The Israelites fled before them, seeking hiding places in dens and caves, and leaving their enemies in possession of their crops and their cattle. When this had continued for seven years Israel was "brought very low because of Midian."

The Destruction of the Altar to Baal. A nameless prophet reminded Israel that the true cause of their suffering was not the power of the Midianites but their own sinfulness. The heart of a young man of the tribe of Manasseh, Gideon by name, was heavy and bitter over the oppression. Why had God forsaken them? As he was beating out wheat in a hidden place he realized that God was summoning him to do something heroic, to be the liberator of his people from the oppression of the Midianites. And at the same time there flashed into his soul, with the voice and power of God, the comprehension that it was not God's neglect but the people's lack of zeal, their moral degradation, their disloyalty to God, which had brought all this suffering upon them. In his own town there was an altar to Baal. It must be overthrown. That very night Gideon demolished it and set up an altar to Jehovah and offered sacrifice. The people were furious the next morning when they saw what had been done. They sought Gideon to kill him. But his shrewd father said: "Will you contend against Baal? If he be a god let him contend for himself. Let Baal strike down the man who insulted him." That seemed wise counsel. The people called Gideon Jerubbaal, that is, Let Baal contend against him. They waited. Nothing happened. Baal was not a god, Jehovah is the only true God, Gideon was his champion, he had proved his right to be their leader, and the people obeyed his summons to make ready for battle.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Valley of Jezreel is the real continuation of the Plain of Esdraelon eastward to the Jordan, between the Hill of Moreh on the north and Mount Gilboa on the south. This is the scene of our lesson.



The Israelites were encamped on the south of this valley on the height of Gilboa above the Spring of Harod. This spring is on the northern base of Mt. Gilboa and is now called by the Arabs Ain Jalud (Fountain of Jezreel). It is a pool fifteen feet in diameter and naturally this abundance of water has made

this spot a favorite camping ground, not only through Biblical times but at the present day. The water from the spring flows northward a short distance and then turns eastward and drains the Valley of Jezreel.

The Midianite camp was two miles away from the Israelites, on the northern side of the Valley of Jezreel. When the Israelites attacked them at night the Midianites fled eastward, down the Valley of Jezreel, hoping to cross the Jordan to their own land on the East. They escaped as far as Beth-shittah, toward Zerrerah; that is, in the neighborhood of Bethbarah (Bethshan) where there is a ford over the Jordan. See the map. The border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath, means, says Dr. George A. Smith, the deep bank over which the Vale of Jezreel falls into the Valley of the Jordan, above the now unknown Tabbath. Here over the ford the two "kings" had crossed, but the two lesser chiefs, the "princes," were intercepted by the Ephraimites and slain.

Let pupils locate the two camps on their map of the Plain of Esdraelon, also Bethbarah, and study paragraph 17 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There are many incidents in this lesson which are suggestive. Among them may be noted:—

Gideon the Despondent, when convinced that the task of freeing Israel from the enemy was his, became Gideon the Optimist. It is a great thing for a teacher to inspire in young men and young women the belief that something is expected of them, that God has some definite work for them to do.

Not heads, but hearts, count for most in God's warfare. Three hundred, or thirty, or three who put their hands to the work of the Lord determined to see it through are worth more to him than thousands who are moved to the undertaking by a passing impulse. Take courage. You have the opportunity for intensive, if not extensive, work. The few who become Christ's zealous followers are worth all your efforts.

Think of the amount of planning which Gideon gave to the thing in hand, and especially of the shrewd way in which he surprised the enemy. Christ once deplored the fact that the same amount of wisdom was not used in Christian as in worldly warfare: you remember how, in the parable, the unrighteous steward is commended because he had done wisely: "for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light." In your Sunday-school work, are you planning wisely? Are you using the best methods? Do you teach the lesson always in the same way, or do you wisely take your pupils by surprise at times? Do you study them and do you know their attitude toward the right as well as Gideon knew the attitude of his men? God is working through you: he is depending on you: do not fail him in the task committed to you. Be willing to give of your best in time and thought and energy if you would be a co-worker with God.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: HOW GIDEON WON THE VICTORY

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What was the scene on the Plain of Esdraelon last week? We saw Barak pursuing the Canaanites in their chariots, the chariots sinking in the mud, wheels revolving slowly or not at all, Barak and his men on foot overtaking them and putting them to flight. Years have now passed. The same Plain is now dotted over with black tents. In these tents another enemy is sleeping, people who belong on the east of the Jordan. They have come over and have taken possession of the good land, and the Israelites have fled before them. They have come with all their possessions, their tents and their cattle and their camels. They ride on the camels, and the camels which their kings and princes use have golden chains around their necks. There are two kings named Zebak and Zalmunna, and two princes named Oreb, "The Raven," and Zeeb, "The Wolf." These kings and princes wear long red cloaks and have large rings of gold in their ears. The Israelites are so afraid of these Midianites, as this enemy is called, that they have hid themselves in dens in the mountains and in caves among the rocks. The Midianites have taken all their grain and cattle and goats and sheep, and the Israelites scarcely have enough to eat.

The Call of Gideon. One day Gideon, a young Israelite, was at work beat-

ing out a handful of grain which he had hidden from the enemy, when he heard the call of God to rouse to action. "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon realized that his people were in such sore distress, not because God had failed them, but because they had failed God, they had turned from his worship to that of the heathen god Baal. So he destroyed the altar of Baal that night, and built in its stead an altar to God and offered sacrifices. The next morning the people were furious and sought to put Gideon to death. But Gideon's wise father calmed them, saying, "Will ye contend for Baal? If he be a god let him contend for himself." Of course Baal couldn't defend himself. Nothing happened. Therefore the people called Gideon Jerubbaal, Let Baal contend, and they believed that God had chosen him to defend them from their enemy.

How Gideon Won the Victory. He won it by *choosing the best material.* At his call hundreds of men came and offered themselves for the fight. But Gideon did not like some of them; he did not think they looked the sort of men for a forlorn hope. So he gave them the chance of going home, and they went. A little child once showed her mother a picture which she called a cat. The mother could see no resemblance to a cat, and so she asked, "But where is his tail?" The child looked puzzled for the moment and then replied, "Why, mother, it is in the ink bottle yet!" So two-thirds of Gideon's men called themselves soldiers but they did not look like soldiers, for they lacked the very important soldierly quality, courage. Gideon did not try to add the courage, he just blotted them out of the scene altogether—bade them pick up their swords and depart.

Then when on the march they came to a stream, Gideon noticed how his men quenched their thirst, and he chose those who showed the greatest eagerness, who were evidently keen to get on to the battle. How did he learn this? This test reduced his force to three hundred men. But they were "Picked Men"—the very best material for the task.

Everyone who has a difficult task in hand does the same. He does not take the first one who comes; he selects the skilled and experienced. You can't build bridges and fight battles and carry out perilous expeditions with the loafers and slackers. And if we are to win out we must follow this example. We must have the best teachers and best books and best helps and put our best effort into the task whatever it is—passing our examinations or breaking from an evil habit.

Gideon won his victory *by his faith.* He took a big risk. A general would say that he did a very foolish thing to lead three hundred men against that host, and that he was lucky to come out of it a winner. But if he took risks it was because of his faith. He believed that God had called him to make the venture, and that God would see him through. His courage and daring audacity sprang from his faith. If he hadn't possessed that faith he would never have ventured and won. We can't do without faith. God sets us difficult tasks—to do work we dislike, to own up when we are in the wrong, to conquer our temper, to overcome our selfishness. But if he has given us the task, he will help us achieve it.

Then Gideon won his victory *by using his brain* It was not a case for muscle and furious onslaught. It was a case for keen wits. He must have a plan that would put the enemy in a panic and give his men a chance to win out. And a very good plan for his purpose was his torch and pitcher surprise. Those three hundred trumpets sounding the charge on the three sides of the enemy's camp, accompanied by the crash of breaking pitchers and the flashing of lights startled the enemy and flung the whole camp into confusion, and the gallant little band had an easy task in putting them to flight.

Faith and muscle and good weapons need good brains back of them. Whatever your task, it cannot be done well without thought. And this holds good of all our spiritual battles. Victory can be won in every sphere, but it takes faith and brains and the best that is in us.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: 2 Ch. 20.15. (Fear not ye, etc.)

Those who believe themselves beaten are beaten.

Work out your own salvation.....for it is God who worketh in you.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.

1. Where is Moab? 2. Why had Naomi gone to Moab? 3. What had happened to her there? 4. Why was she returning to Bethlehem? 5. Where is Bethlehem? 6. What greatly loved wife had been buried near Bethlehem? (Gen 35.19.) 7. For what is Bethlehem famous? 8. Whom did Ruth marry at Bethlehem, and what are the names of Ruth's sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons? (Ruth 4. 14-17.) 9. Tell the story of the gleaners, Ruth 2.

Note-Book Work. II. The Lesson Title; how and why Gideon reduced his army; how he won the victory; a sentence sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: VICTORY BY GOD'S HELP

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. On the eve of the Civil War in England, Oliver Cromwell was made captain of a troop. He wanted a company of men upon whom he could depend. Men came in large numbers to enlist, but Cromwell would not take them all, for he was very particular about the kind of men he should have in his troop. He would not take a man just because he was of noble birth: "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain, that knows what he is fighting for, and loves what he knows, than what you call a 'gentleman,' and is nothing else." And he would not take a man merely because he was an experienced fighter. "I must have men who have the fear of God before them," he explained. Gradually he sifted out the men until he had a regiment of one thousand. "A few honest men are better than numbers," he said. This regiment, known as Cromwell's Ironsides, became famous: they never were beaten. "Had Cromwell done nothing else but raise and discipline that magnificent regiment he would deserve lasting fame," says the historian.

Our lesson today is about Gideon and the Three Hundred: why was the number of this famous regiment reduced? How? (See The Winnowing of the Army, Third Topic.)

He Would not Ascribe the Victory to God. Lest the Israelites should vaunt themselves saying, Mine own hand hath saved me, Gideon's army was reduced to a very small number. Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, was once tempted to vaunt himself. He heard a minister ascribe to God all the glory of that victory, and after standing it as long as he could, it is said that he arose and observed, "Please, Parson, I was there, too." But the parson sternly replied, "Sit down, thou presumptuous man."

Lincoln's Dependence on the Help of God. During the Civil War, Richard Ogelsby, Governor of Illinois, lost all hope of the success of the cause he had so much at heart, and wrote President Lincoln that he thought all was lost. In answer he received this telegram: "Dear Dick: Read Exodus 14.13: 'Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.' Abraham Lincoln."

General Sickles lost a leg at Gettysburg and was in the hospital at Washington. President Lincoln called upon him. General Rushing was present at the interview. Bishop Fowler gives the interview as it was told him both by General Sickles and General Rushing. General Sickles asked: "President Lincoln, were you alarmed during the Gettysburg days?" Mr. Lincoln answered: "No, General, I was not; some of our people were, but I was not. Stanton thought we had better put the archives on a gunboat, but I thought we would come out all right." General Sickles asked: "'President Lincoln, why were you not alarmed?" Mr. Lincoln hesitated a little and said: "Now, General, you have asked me, I will tell you. I went into my room, locked the door, got down on my knees and said, 'Oh, Lord God, I have done absolutely everything I can, and now you must help!' and God told me he would give me Gettysburg, and I believed him."

God Plus All. The world has seen what God and Martin Luther have done, what God and John Calvin have done, and what God and D. L. Moody have done, and what God and many others have done, but the world has yet to see what God and all his people can do.—From a letter to Dr. Lyman Abbott, in The Outlook.

A Few Lessons from Gideon's Life. Gideon lived up to the light he had. Do we? Gideon's faith in God was unfaltering. Is ours? Gideon pressed on "faint yet pursuing." Does our zeal hold out? Gideon gave to God the glory. Do we realize God's guiding care in our lives?

Sentence Sermons to Remember. There is but one way in which man can ever help God—that is by letting God help him.—Ruskin.

Let us combine shrewd common sense with an unfailing and resistless faith. Right religion and right patriotism go hand in hand.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the whole Book of Ruth and be able to tell the complete history. 2. Where do farewells usually take place in Eastern lands? 3. What sort of daughter had Ruth been during Naomi's stay in Moab? (Verse 8.) 4. During her life in Bethlehem? (Ruth 4.15.) 5. What four things does Ruth declare she will share with Naomi? 6. What is the meaning of Ruth's words in verse 17? 7. Did Ruth ever have cause to regret her life decision? 8. Do you think she would have regretted it if it had turned out unhappily for her? 9. What winsome youth did Jesus ask to make a life decision and how did he meet the opportunity? 10. What should you do before making an important decision?

Note-Book Work. II. Gideon's Victory.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: ONE WITH GOD A MAJORITY

Additional Material: Genesis 6.5-8.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "A writer of our time has said of the story of Gideon that in force and beauty it is equal to any episode in the epic poems of Greece. Whatever homage we may pay to it as literature, we cannot deny its moral reality. There are in it certain peculiar features. But there is present a character—a character with a way upon him. Amid those far off wonders, we see a real man marching at the full height of his manhood: coming forth from God and effecting the work which was needed in his own day, in the spirit which is indispensable to God's service at all times. Gideon himself is real enough and strong enough to carry us past the difficulties of his story. May God quicken our sluggish lives to his pace, and lift them to the pitch of his!"

The Call of Gideon. "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor!" is the message that comes to Gideon. And what is Gideon's answer? "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his wondrous works, which our fathers told us of?" "Go in this thy might and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee?" is the only answer Gideon receives. And Gideon professes himself too weak for the task. "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man," is the only reply. There was no argument. "But there grows upon Gideon the sense that he is dealing with God, in the presence of whose command questions grow dumb, and beneath whose hand the sense of weakness and unfitness vanishes away. It is in no different fashion that men are released today from the hesitation and the fear which doubt produces. Many questions will remain unanswered to the end. Many you will come to feel are not worth answering at all; some will turn out to be indifferent. It is not an answer that we need; it is a call. It is not to have mastered this or that answer to our questions; it is to render obedience to a Power which will bring us through the submission of our will to greatness and power."

The First Act. No sooner had the angel of the Lord taken his departure than Gideon threw down his staff and went into the house where his mother sat mourning day and night for the loss of her sons slain at Tabor, each one resembling the son of a king. And Gideon said to his weeping mother, "Awake, my mother, and sing to me the song of Deborah." And while she only sat and wept, her son took out and whetted his sword and sharpened his ax. "Sing to me," he said, "how Deborah and Barak arose and delivered Israel. Sing to me, ye daughters of Joash, of how the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

Night fell and at midnight, behold ten men, and each man with a pitcher and a lamp in it in his left hand, and with his ax in his right hand, stole out of his house and met Gideon. Their meeting was beside the altar of Baal and in the grove of Baal, which was built and planted in Joash's high place. For, how could Joash's son think to cast out a single Midianite as long as that unclean altar and those unclean trees stood beside his father's house? He could not. But at every blow of Gideon's swift ax new strength came into his arm. At every tree that fell before his ax his courage rose. And the light of God's countenance returned already to Israel in every star that shone down through the opening spaces in the grove of Baal.

Why is your life in such bondage and fear and famine tonight? Why have you not been fed today and every day with the finest of the wheat? Why are you not satisfied every day with honey out of the rock? Arise in this thy might, and the Lord will make of thee also a mighty man of valor. Be sure of this, that thy sure way of deliverance and peace and plenty lies for thee also through that levelled grove and over that prostrate altar.—Dr. Alexander Whyte, in Bible Characters.

The Need of Leaders. There are times in every nation's life when there is a special opportunity for leaders. Such a time comes when people are eager to be doing, but have no plan. Their disposition to be led is rapidly augmented by delay, and is ready to crystallize round any man who has decision, daring and initiative. We have seen this mood in our own nation during war days. That was the mood of the Northern Tribes when Gideon sent out his summons. There was an immediate and ample response.

But the companion fact has also to be remembered. When the hour is ripe for leadership, an entire nation pivots on one man, and if he fails, there follows inevitable disaster. It is he who makes the scattered fragments into a coherent whole. Hence the fact that God lavished his care on Gideon, bore with his hesitation and guided his judgment. If the simile is not unbecoming, it is like a trainer caring to the last moment for the athlete about to enter the contest.

If I mistake not, there is a great craving for new leadership in the religious life of our land. Should not our prayers more consciously be urgent with this petition? He must be God-made, not man-made, if his work is to be worth while. We need a Gideon, but he must be molded by God.—R. C. Gillie.

The Unwelcome Angel. One evening after dinner Robert Sanderson walked into his father's study with a troubled face.

"What's the matter, my boy?" asked the older man.

"Nothing very serious, I guess," said the son, "only I'm up against a decision, and, as you know, I don't like to be driven to that. The firm has offered me the managership of the branch in St. Louis, and I don't know whether to accept or not. They want my decision tomorrow morning, and I don't know what to do. You see, I'm not worried about the branch in itself. It is successful. The thing that troubles me is whether I'm big enough to swing it. There's more money in it than in my present job, and I shall have a chance to show what's in me, if there is anything. But I know my job here as superintendent, and this other is a leap into the dark. And yet it seems to be the parting of the ways: it's either take this now or settle down in the present job forever."

"I know what you're facing, Robert," said the father kindly. "None of us likes to be driven face to face with a difficult decision, and yet all growing men have to face it. It is only the static persons who are never troubled by it. I should be anxious about you if, after five years as superintendent, they hadn't seen fit to offer you this position. Decision has been forced on you by opportunity. And let me say further that the greater responsibility that opportunity opens up always leaves the right sort of man anxious and sober.

"Do you remember how young Gideon was threshing wheat by a cave one day to hide it from the Midianites, who were oppressing his people, when the angel of the Lord came and told him to go forth as leader and redeem his people? And he said, 'Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.' That angel was about as welcome to Gideon as this larger opportunity is to you. He accepted the responsibility and succeeded, but just at that time he wished the angel had appeared to some one else.

"As I follow the stories of Bible leaders I find that nearly all of them had this shrinking in the face of new responsibility. Moses had it when God told him to go to Pharaoh. Isaiah had it when God told him to preach to the people of Judah. Jeremiah had it when he was called to prophesy, and said, 'Woe is me!' Saul had it when he was called to preach, and he hid his face and sank to the ground. Yet none of those men failed. I think that their very modesty was part of their qualification for big things. They knew a big job when they saw it. And no man is fit for a big job until he has measured it and learned to respect its implications. On the other hand, only a craven backs away when a big opportunity challenges him. You know the old saying: 'To dare to fail is noble; to fail to dare is ignoble.' I'd take the dare and leave the rest to God. If he has called you, he'll equip you, as he did those other men."—Youth's Companion.

If God is for Us, Who is Against Us? In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, there is a representation of the Battle of Ivry, in which Henry IV of Navarre is waging war. Up in the right-hand corner one sees which of the contending armies will gain the victory. There is pictured a group of angels with drawn swords: they who are guarded by the divine forces will win the day.

In his life of Cromwell, Hood recalls the world-wide surprise when Cromwell's unskilled farmer soldiers conquered the trained armies of the Royalists. After giving various reasons for their victory, he gives the true one: "The principal reason, after all, is found in the higher faith of Cromwell's men. Their battle cry was, 'God with us.'"

The Strength is from God. There was at one time a peculiar-looking structure in New York City at the corner of Fifteenth St. and Irving Place. Formerly there was a twelve-story building here, and the owners decided to add six stories more. Then they discovered that the old building was not strong enough to bear the weight of the six additional stories. What could be done? Expert engineers solved the problem, and the six stories were suspended in the air above the lower twelve, not resting on the old building, but hanging from heavy girders above, which rested on five pairs of huge columns, two hundred and fifty feet high, erected on each side of the old building. While the work was in progress the six stories seemed to hang in mid-air.

Looking on that building, I saw a parable. Each Christian worker is too weak to bear a great burden of responsibility, utterly unable to stand the strain of attempting great things for God, but the responsibility is borne and the great things are accomplished, because the burden is borne from above. Jehovah is with them, and the victory comes with his help.

What God Can Do through You. I read recently that if you take a bar of iron which is worth one pound, and expend upon it sufficient labor to make it into horse-shoes, you will increase its value, for the horse-shoes will be worth two pounds. If you take the same bar of iron and expend sufficient labor of the right sort upon it, and make it into needles, it is worth seventy pounds. And if you take the same bar of iron, and make it into fine balance springs for watches, it is worth thousands of pounds. If human labor and ingenuity can transform in value and usefulness a bar of iron from one pound into thousands of pounds, it is but a feeble and altogether inadequate picture of what the Lord can do with any one life, when it is surrendered to him for discipline and for training, and for the bringing to fulness all the potentialities that lie in it.—J. Stuart Holden, in Supposition and Certainty.

Go and Be Used by God. Church history is still being made by God and Gideon. It is still Gideonites versus Midianites, and over all, God. Gideon and his three hundred are today on missionary ground—a thin skirmishing line holding back, and, sublime audacity! even trying to press back, the embattled millions of heathendom. Gideon and his three hundred are tonight in the slums—a plucky, persevering little detachment, wrestling with Apollyons in the valleys and with misery in the alleys. Gideon and his three hundred will be here tomorrow because they were there yesterday, and because, as the explicatory principle of the whole process, Jehovah—who might create a million angels a minute to do his will—prefers still, as he has ever done, to work through some son of Joash of the Abiezrites or child of Jesse the Bethlehemite. The Lord is an austere man, who reaps where he has sent Moses, or Daniel or Paul to sow, taking without question of the gold of Solomon or the spices of Joseph of Arimathea. Go and be used by God—that is the peremptory order to all, the ethical finality of life.—C. A. S. Dwight, in God and Gideon.

For Enlargement or Discussion. Gideon and his Victory. See Chapter XV, Vol. I. of Stanley's History of the Jewish Church.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. To what age does the story of Ruth belong? 2. Briefly, what is the story? 3. How does the book rank as literature? 4. What are its lessons for us? 5. What do you know about the land of Moab from 2 K. 3.4; Isa. 15, 16? 6. What is the position of an unmarried woman or a widow in the East? 7. What was the ancient law in regard to the marriage of Israelites with those of another nation? (Dt. 7.3.) 8. What was the Hebrew law in regard to the treatment of a widow by the next of kin? 9. What qualities does Ruth show in the entire story? 10. What led Ruth to choose Jehovah as her God? 11. What characteristics of Naomi should every Christian have?

RUTH'S WISE CHOICE

Golden Text

**Thy people shall be my people,
and thy God my God. Ruth 1.16**

LESSON Ruth 1 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 91

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Ruth 2.1 to 4.22

RUTH 1.14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and *the women* said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Ruth's Beautiful Devotion and Wise Choice
At Bethlehem Distress Women's Comment
Ruth's Brave Deeds Wedded Content

I. THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY, verses 1-13. In the days of the judges there was a famine in the land, and to escape it a Bethlehemite family, Elimelech and his wife Naomi and their two sons, left their home and settled in Moab. There their sons married two daughters of Moab, Ruth and Orpah. Ten years passed, father and sons found their graves in the alien soil, and Naomi determined to return to her native land. In eastern lands farewells seldom take place in the home, and Ruth and Naomi carried out the usual custom when they accompanied Naomi a short distance on her way. When Naomi thought they had gone far enough to show her fitting respect, she stopped to dismiss them.

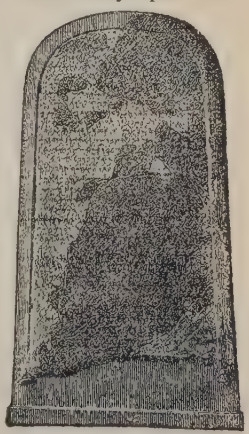
II. TWO GREAT DECISIONS, verses 14-18. Then *they lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law;* and returned to her people, the Greek version adds. *But Ruth clave unto her,* clung to her. Naomi tried to send Ruth back also: *Behold,* she said, *thy sister-in-law is gone back to her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law.* Orpah's god, the god of Moab, was Chemosh. It is interesting in this connec-

tion to recall the Moabite stone, now in the Louvre, Paris, on which is an inscription stating that when Moab was subject to the King of Israel, (in the middle of Ahab's reign) Chemosh enabled Mesba the king to win victories over Israel, and secure the independence of Moab.

Bas-Relief of a Moabite

In answer Ruth uttered those words which have become so famous: *Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* The ancient idea was that each people had its own god, and in going to another land one must necessarily serve the god of that land: compare 1 S. 26.19, where David declares, "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods." Ruth's affection for her mother was so great that she would not leave her, even though that decision involved the giving up of her own country and its god: her decision was farther-reaching than she fully realized, and she and her descendants became worshippers of the only true God. The comments of an English writer, Dr. P. T. Forsyth, upon the sacrifices the missionaries make, recalls this sacrifice of Ruth's: "There is nothing finer or more pathetic to me than the way in which missionaries unlearn the love of the old home, die to their native land, and wed their hearts to the people they have served and won; so that they can not rest in England, but must return to lay their bones where they spent their hearts for Christ." This passion of a kingdom which has no frontiers and no favored race is the passion of a homeless Christ.

Ruth vows to share four things with her mother: her lot, her nationality, her religion, her grave. "The simple dignity of the iteration in varying phrase till the climax is reached beyond which no promise could go, the quiet fervor of the feeling, the thought which seems to have almost a Christian depth—all were beautiful, pathetic, noble." The climax is reached in her words, *Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried,* for to an oriental of that time to be buried in a strange land was almost as abhorrent as it is for the Chinese of today. Recall the expression frequently met with in the books of Kings, "He slept with his fathers."



The Moabite Stone

Jehovah do so to me, and *more also, if aught but death part thee and me,* is Ruth's conclusion. Her expression alludes to the custom sometimes observed of slaying an animal when a formal oath was taken, and it meant that she asked to have the same fate as such a victim if she failed to keep her vow. No wonder that Naomi, seeing that Ruth *was stedfastly minded to go with her,* ceased to urge her return. Steadfastness of devotion is one of the virtues crowned by history. "Whether seen in Antigone of the Greeks—that ideal sister who would not desert even the dead body of her brother—or in Penelope, who trusted for twenty years in the returning ships of her husband, or in the disciples around Christ, who died at last, here and there, in obedience to their attachment, or in the long line of martyrs whose blood is sprinkled over the leaves of history, this steadfastness stands forth in unwavering excellence" (David Ewing).

III. THE ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM, verses 19-22. Upon their arrival in Bethlehem, *all the city was moved about them, and the women said, Is this Naomi?* "This expresses the general astonishment at the change which had passed upon her. No doubt the little hamlet had been all aflame with gossip

when, ten years before, the rich sheep-master, Elimelech, had left it, and many pious brows had been shaken over his sin in going to sojourn among the heathen. And, no doubt, on Naomi's return, many who would have shared that sin if they could, and many who had committed far worse sins than any of which she had been guilty, once more shook their heads in grave rebuke, and were found to recognize the judgments of an offended God in the calamities which had befallen her. It may be feared that there was more blame than pity in the ejaculation, 'This Naomi!'" (Samuel Cox).

Call me not Naomi, she said, *call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.* "At a time when personal names meant something, she bore the name *Winsome.* Sadness, quietness, strength, these made the notes of her life melody; but she had had the rare gift of making quiet strength attractive" (Moulton).

IV. THE END OF THE STORY, Chapters II-IV. It was the beginning of barley harvest when the two reached Bethlehem, and Ruth went forth to glean in the fields and support her mother and herself. Farmers in Palestine, even to this day, do not have their houses on their farmlands, but live in houses closely huddled together in a village. They go out to their harvest fields in the early morning, taking their bread with them, and return at night. If the fields are very far away they sleep on the ground or under a booth during the nights of harvest. Bands of reapers go from one harvest district to another. Women and children follow the reapers and glean any stray wisps that the reapers overlook. Thus Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz, and thus she came to his attention. It was the law that the next of kin in the family of a husband who died childless must marry his widow. Boaz was related to Elimelech, Ruth's father-in-law, and he fulfilled the law and married Ruth. Their son was Obed; Obed's son was Jesse; Jesse's son was David, who became the great king of Israel.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

As ye have dealt with the dead, verse 8. Naomi here refers, I think, to her daughters' kindness to her sons while they were yet living. But Jewish commentators do not so interpret her words. "Ruth and Orpah applied themselves to the preparation of the grave clothes for the dead," says the Midrash. And modern Jewish commentators explain the use here in the Hebrew of the masculine form of speech, instead of the feminine gender, as called for, because these women did the work of men in providing what was needed for the dead; or because these women manifested in the hour of their bereavement the strength of will, the self-command, the control over their emotions, which we usually consider characteristic of men, and in their eager and wifely zeal to do all that love and respect demanded, suppressed for the time being all thought of their own loss and sorrow.

It is interesting to note the special care which the people of Moab once bestowed upon their dead, as seen in the ancient dolmens still preserved in that land. A dolmen is an inclosure made of roughly-hewn stones covered with a flat rock. Within, by the bones of the dead, rings and tear bottles have been found.

Jehovah grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband, verse 9. A woman in Eastern lands can find rest only in the house of her husband. There is no place in the East for an unmarried woman, whether maid or widow, and the best wish that Naomi could utter for these two young widows was that they might speedily be married again. They would be more likely to find husbands in their own land than in hers, for their people were hated by the Judeans and they were, moreover, penniless.

Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her, verse 14. What Naomi said shows how great was her love for her daughters-in-law. Contrast with this beautiful story the proverb which is current in Palestine today: "Were a mother-in-law to love her daughter-in-law, dogs would go to Paradise." The flower-venders of Damascus offer their wares crying, "Buy a bunch to appease your mother-in-law."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first important judge of Israel? Who was her general? Against what enemy did they contend?

To whom did she ascribe the victory? What qualities did she possess? From what enemy did Gideon free his people? To whom was that victory due? What kind of events are narrated in the Book of Judges? What sort of age was the time of the judges?

The Latter History of the Judges. Gideon's victory over the Midianites was followed by a long period of peace. Upon his death the people turned to idolatry. Abimelech, one of his sons, gained control and kept it by continual bloodshed. Jotham, the only brother who escaped with his life, spoke to the men of Shechem who had chosen Abimelech, his famous Fable of the Trees, the oldest recorded fable.

About Tola and Jair, the two succeeding judges, we know little. Jepthah, the next judge, gained the victory over the Ammonites, but his fame in history

Portal of the So-called Tomb of the Judges, near Jerusalem

rests upon his carrying out of his cruel vow that "Whatsoever cometh forth from the doors" of his house to meet him when he returned in peace he would offer up for a burnt offering. His daughter, his only child, was thus sacrificed.

Three judges are mentioned, and then comes Samson, the history of whose exploits and contests with the Philistines occupies one-sixth of the Book of Judges.

Judges and Ruth Contrasted. "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land": thus begins the Book of Ruth which follows the Book of Judges. No greater contrast could be found than between these two books. In turning from one to the other we pass from wild scenes of bloodshed to quiet domestic life, and it is difficult to realize that both belong to the same land and time. But just as in the early history of our country the colonists engaged in agriculture in the periods of peace that intervened between the wars with the Indians, so the Israelites had times of peace between successive wars with the native inhabitants of Canaan.

The Book of Ruth. See pages 27-28 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

When Elimelech and Naomi left Bethlehem for Moab they left fields that were sown with stones on the rocky Judean hills for what was then a veritable garden spot, the land of Moab. Moab occupied a part of the tableland east of the Jordan Valley: its eastern limit was the desert; its southern, Edom; its western, the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley. Its northern border was at times the River Arnon and at others nearer the Wady Heshban, at the northern end of the Dead Sea. This tableland is about 3,000 feet above sea level, and 4,300 feet above the Dead Sea. Today it is a great pasture land for sheep and goats, cattle and camels.

Moab had been the eyesore of Israel. It had blocked her passage through

the desert. It had given her its solemn malediction. It had leagued against her with Midian. It had proved a grave to her lawgiver, Moses.

To reach Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth had to descend into the hot Jordan Valley, which at the head of the Dead Sea lies 1,300 feet below the ocean, and then ascend to Bethlehem. Bethlehem lies on a terraced hillside six miles south of Jerusalem.

Assign paragraphs 59, 60 and 84 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Ruth made her resolve that Jehovah should be her God, because he was Naomi's God. Had Naomi, believer in Jehovah though she was, been less lovable a character, less attractive a personality, Ruth would never have been led to her great decision. A teacher's personality is an important factor in the winning of his class for Christ. He must himself be winsome if he would win. Religion is oftener caught than taught. "We may borrow the brush of a great painter, but unless we can get a glint of the painter's genius we shall do as badly with his tools as with our own." We may follow the best approved methods in our teaching, our lesson material may be pedagogically faultless, but unless we have a glint of the Great Teacher's spirit, our teaching will be without power.

Our Sunday-schools have a special day called "Decision Day," and for weeks beforehand teachers are preparing their classes for it, and are praying that when the day comes their pupils may be led to make the great decision. For older pupils this is wise; adults must weigh well the great step. Those who have gone astray must be converted, and conversion is the product not only of revelation (God's work) but of reflection (the individual's placing himself in a certain attitude towards God). But little children who are living under Christian influences do not need a long period of deliberation before deciding to be Christians. As Ruth followed Naomi, so they will follow Christ: as Ruth chose the True God, so will they, today. Why should they wait for a stronger motive or a more convenient season? So present the beautiful story of Ruth's great choice, teachers of young girls, that your girls will make the same choice. Teachers of young boys may wisely impress today the lesson of steadfastness to a resolution made, a purpose formed, and in connection with the lesson about Samuel next week ask the boys to decide and then, recalling by questions today's lesson, leave in their minds the will to abide by their decision.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: RUTH AND NAOMI

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Tell the whole story of Ruth in seven scenes: (1) Naomi's home in Bethlehem; (2) Naomi on her way to Moab with her family; (3) The new home in Moab and the death of the father; (4) The new daughters and the death of the sons; (5) Ruth's great choice and the return to Bethlehem; (6) Ruth caring for her mother by gleaning in the fields; (7) Ruth's new home and the happy grandmother.

Ruth in Bethlehem. Ruth wore the dress of the village girls, of deep green and bright red, with a white veil streaming over her shoulders, and a row of coins upon her brow; and she was a pleasant sight as, rising early in the morning before the clouds were red over Hermon, she went down into the valley where the harvesters were at work, and followed the reapers, picking up, as a gleaner, all the stray heads of barley she could find.

When Boaz, the farmer, came down from the village to see how the work was going on, he asked the name of the strange damsel, and spoke kindly to her, calling her his daughter, and bidding her keep close to his maidens and no one would touch her, and not to leave his fields.

When the mid-day heat was great, the reapers gathered in a shady place, and Boaz bade her come and share their bread and he gave her parched corn, as much as she could eat. In the afternoon they rose to work again, and Boaz told the reapers to let her glean among the sheaves, and to pull out a handful here and there, and let it fall for her to get; and she gleaned there till the sun went down over the hills. What she gathered was too much to carry away, and she sat down and beat the barley out between two stones, and tying it up in her veil put it on her head, and went home with a light step. Naomi was astonished when she opened out her store in the little house; for she had gleaned more than a bushel of barley.

But as time went on Ruth and Naomi did not need to live in poverty, for Boaz married Ruth at the end of the wheat-harvest; and so this Moabite girl became the great-grandmother of David, the most famous king of Israel.—Robert Bird.

Ruth the Favorite. All the world loves Ruth. Can you tell me why?

(1) Because of her *choice*. She had two courses open to her. One was easy, and the other was hard. She could go back to her own city, find her people and live with them in comfort: that was easy. She could go on with Naomi: that was hard. It meant many hardships, the going into a strange land amongst strange people who were the enemies of her own people. Ruth chose the hard way, and it turned out for the best. Her sister Orpah took the easy way, and we hear no more about her. For Ruth there were happiness, prosperity, and a place in the ancestry of Christ. When you have a choice to make, remember that the hard thing often turns out to be the right thing.

(2) Then we love Ruth for her *sacrifice*. To go with Naomi meant giving up a great deal, her land, her family, her home, her gods, and everything that was familiar and dear. It was not easy to give up so much. Yet Ruth flung all these things away for the sake of a poor, lonely, and even embittered old woman, who was only her mother-in-law. When some people find that their choice means giving up what they count dear they regret their decision and change it. Ruth was not one of those. She knew what a sacrifice she was making, and yet she did it. This is what makes her action so noble. It was not done on impulse. It was done deliberately, with full knowledge of the cost. Do you think you could do a thing like that?

(3) We love Ruth for her *steadfastness*. Naomi urged her to return. But if Ruth was sweet and gentle, she was also firm. She would not give way. She insisted in words that are immortal for their beauty and irresistible in their pleading. And when afterwards the way proved hard and she was often foot-sore and weary, perhaps hungry and thirsty, she never weakened. She had made her choice and she abode by it. People who put their hands to the plough and then want to turn back are not worth much. Don't be one of those.

(4) We love Ruth for her *devotion*. How could she do as she did? Because she loved Naomi. Her mother Naomi must have been a fine woman, and must have treated Ruth splendidly to win such love. Ruth's love for her led her to leave all things for her sake. Love is the secret of all great decisions. It is love of right, of faith, of freedom, of country, of Christ, which results in noble actions.

A Noble Deed.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
  Our hearts, in glad surprise,
  To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
  And lifts us unawares
  Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
  And by their overflow
  Rouse us from what is low!—Longfellow.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Ruth 1.16.

"The way to be comfortable is to make others comfortable: the way to make others comfortable is to appear to love them: the way to appear to love them is to love them in reality."

It is only the great-hearted who can be true friends; the mean and cowardly never know what true friendship means.—Charles Kingsley.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Samuel living with Eli? (1 S. 2.) 2. What is said about him in 1 Sam. 2.26? 3. What were some of Samuel's duties in the tabernacle? (Verse 15.) 4. What does the verb *wax*, verse 6, mean? 5. Tell the story of Samuel's call. 6. How did Samuel show obedience? 7. Trust? 8. Courage? 9. What does our Golden Text say we should do? 10. When should we do it, according to Eccles. 12.1?

Note-Book Work. III. The Title of the Lesson; a statement about Naomi; one about Orpah; four statements about Ruth; the Golden Text.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC: LIFE DECISIONS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What is the last story book that you have read? Did it have a happy ending? Did it have a happy beginning? Why does every one like the story of Cinderella or Sinbad the Sailor? Do you know of any man or woman who as a boy or girl was poor or sick or in trouble but whose life afterwards was very happy?

We all like to have good things happen to our heroes and heroines at the right moment. Who is the heroine in our lesson today? Where did she live? Point out Moab on the map. She was young, but she had had a great sorrow—what was it? With what two others was she walking along a hot, dusty Syrian road? In what direction were they going? Why did Naomi want to go there? What hard decision did the two girls have to make? Why would it be hard to leave Naomi and return to their own home? Why would it be hard to go on with Naomi to Bethlehem? Which do you think would be the harder to do? Our lesson tells us how Ruth decided, and this decision brought great happiness into her life. Do you ever turn over to the end of a book to see if it ends all right, and then, satisfied, go back and read the story through? Let us do this today. Turn to the last chapter of the Book of Ruth and read verses 14-17.

Ruth's Great Decision. As these three lonely widows on that country road, Ruth feels she has come to one of the great decisive points of life. She is "Diana of the Crossways." Behind her, in the sweet light of reminiscence, is Moab, the home of her childhood, her mother and her father; the scene of her friendships, the centre of her interests. Before her lies Israel with its dark, forbidding hills, its alien faces, its unknown trials. What calls her thither? To outward seeming, little. Ease, pleasure, even common prudence, as Naomi points out, bid her return to that land where love and hope are waiting for one so winning.

Yes, but she "hears a voice we cannot hear." It is the voice of duty, of compassion, of faith, of love. This calls her on, and will not let her go. That desolate widow strikes her heart with a high heroic note. Nor that only. It is no mere Naomi she sees standing before her in piteous farewell. It is her dead husband's mother. Nay, more, it her dead husband's faith, her dead husband's Jehovah. Can she go forward to make these her own? She can, and even now she will. And the depth of her heroic resolve is measured by the high, impassioned language in which that resolve finds expression. Nowhere, it has been truly said, in the whole of the Old Testament, are there words more beautiful in their simple pathos or more eloquent in their unconscious poetry.—W. Mackintosh Mackay, in The Woman of Tact.

General William Booth's Life Decision. At an International Congress held in 1904, General Booth gave this account of the origin of the Salvation Army. "I walked back to our West-End home and said to my wife: 'O Kate, I have found my destiny! These are the people for whose salvation I have been longing all these years. As I passed by the doors of the flaming gin-palaces tonight I seemed to hear a voice sounding in my ears, Where can you go and find such heathen as these, and where is there so great a need for your labors? And there and then in my soul I offered myself and you and the children up to this great work. Those people shall be our people, and they shall have our God for their God.'"

They Who Never Made a Life Decision. In Dante's great poem, the neutrals, those who in this world have never taken a side, occupy the mouth and vestibule of hell. There they swirl unceasingly in clouds of red sand, their faces bitten by wasps and hornets. They pursue in a blind, fatal way a flag which never stays for a moment in one place. Dante denies them the moral dignity of a place even in hell itself. "Heaven will not have them, and the deep hell received them not lest the wicked there should have some glory over them"—lest the wicked, that is, looking at these neutrals, should be able to feel that there were souls worse than themselves.

And what was the sin of these neutrals? Oh, simply this: they had never taken a side. They had spent God's precious moment, which is our life, they had spent it watching which way the wind was likely to blow. In this present

world, the very purpose of which is that our soul may acquire some master-bent, some moral habit and disposition in obedience to which one may face life and death, in this present world, these had committed themselves to nothing. They had spent their days in dodging reality, in defending their own mean comfort. They had been neither for one side nor the other, but only for themselves. They had lived without blame and without praise.

Vergil, who in the poem is Dante's guide through hell, who represents the natural honor and chastity of the human soul, all that is best in man short of that grace of God which came to man with Christ—Vergil, the high-minded pagan, is even more contemptuous of those neutrals: "Let us not speak of them," says he; "let us give them one look and pass on."—Condensed from At Close Quarters, by John A. Hutton.

Till My God Is Their God. Mary Swail Taft, writing of life in India, has this to say about "the greatest sight in all India." It was not Mount Everest, or the Taj Mahal. "It was a lone American woman physician, daughter of a university professor, living alone in one of India's sacred cities. In Brindaban, on the Jumna, thronging with garlanded sacred cows, chattering sacred monkeys, vile priests, temple women to the number of eight thousand—a haunting nightmare of a city—she was carrying on her work. We had taken tiffin with her. Never can I forget that good-bye as she stood on the veranda of her bungalow. It seemed so impossible to leave her there, lily-faced, lily-souled, in that cesspool of iniquity, with not a single one of her own race. She answered the unspoken thought: 'But these people are my people.' Her life was a vow. With another she had said, 'These people shall be my people till my God is their God.' So the people call her a *Sadhu*—a holy one—and when she lay sick unto death they hovered about the door, saying, 'I will not speak, only let me see her.'"

How to Reach a Life Decision. Exclude worry about the matter. Determine not to think about it except when you are giving your entire thought to it. Do not let the matter cloud all your other interests. I have found it a good rule, when confronted with a problem, to take active exercise, and dismiss it from my consideration until I can go into the affair without interruption. Hurried decisions are mostly wrong decisions.

It is a time for judgment, and judgment can only be given after a careful survey of the facts. Sometimes it is a relief to write down the state of affairs candidly, before coming to a decision. Perhaps no other eyes but your own may see what you write; though occasionally a written statement put before a wise counsellor will obtain from him the advice or guidance which you need. But in any case it is useful and clarifying to put the matter in writing, adding from time to time any new points that occur to you. The sharpest corners in life must be turned alone; and in the end the decision will have to be taken by yourself.

Above all, remember that prayer will alone help you, coupled with a courageous determination to "follow the gleam." Shut yourself up with God in your time of decision.—Adopted from an article in The Christian.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. A man who lives right and is right has more power in his silence than another has by his words.—Phillips Brooks.

There is always a Cape Horn in one's life, that one either weathers or wrecks oneself on.—Huxley.

(Learn Thomas Hood's poem entitled Ruth.)

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do we have two books each of Samuel and Kings? 2. What did Hannah promise to do if she were given a son? (1 S. 1.9-11.) 3. How did she keep her promise? (1 S. 1.24-28). 4. How did Samuel "minister unto Jehovah before Eli"? 5. For what does the expression "From Dan to Beersheba," verse 20, stand? 6. Did it require courage for Samuel to tell Eli what he did? 7. What qualities do you admire in the boy Samuel? 8. How did God's call come to Samuel? 9. To Paul? 10. Does his call come to everyone in the same way? 11. Are you willing to obey his call when it comes to you? 12. Has it come?

Note-Book Work. III. Ruth's Great Decision. Add a portrayal of Ruth as given by Naomi; of Naomi, as given by Ruth; of Boaz, as given by Ruth; of Ruth, as given by Boaz.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE POWER OF PERSONAL INFLUENCE

Additional Material: Matthew 5.13-16; 2 Cor. 3.2, 3.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Have you read any of Hall Caine's novels? Did you like them? Do you consider him a competent authority as to what constitutes an interesting story? "There is no book in the world like the Bible," he says, "and the finest novels ever written fall short in interest of any of the stories it tells." One of the most beautiful stories in the Bible is about Ruth the Moabitess. "No doubt the story is a love story, and is designed to set forth the power of love to overcome all the alienations, hostilities, and prejudices of nature and of that second nature which we call 'habit.' But it is not a story of romantic love between a young man and a young woman. It is the story of a woman's love for a woman; and, strangely as it would sound in the ears of our modern wits, it is the story of a young wife's passionate and devoted love for her mother-in-law. Ruth's tender, self-sacrificing affection for Naomi is the very charm of the story. It is in the strength of love that she abandons Moab and her father's house; it is in the strength of love that she also conquers the prejudices and jealousies of Bethlehem, and compels even Hebrews to admire her virtue and record her fame. And in that it was by her love for Naomi that Ruth was brought to know and serve the only wise and true God, we may see an illustration of the fact that men and women are often led to religion by natural affection, and rise to the love of God through their love for one another."

The Power of Influence. I have a watch in my pocket. One day I was using a magnet, and I unwittingly slipped it into the same pocket, and forgot it. What happened to it? (The steel works became magnetized.) But the magnet did not touch the works. (It does not need to, so long as it is brought near enough.) Quite so. See these needles on the table, and watch them as I push the magnet towards them. There! They did not wait till it touched them; they felt its *"influence,"* and responded to it before it reached them. Every magnet has about it *"a field of influence,"* and any iron coming within that field is affected. Some powerful magnets have big fields of influence, and some are weak and have small fields; but each has its own field of influence.

Every one of you has a "field of influence." Your home is part of it; your class, the circle of your acquaintance—these form it; and the persons who come within that field are influenced by you. Similarly, you pass into other fields of influence. Now notice, (a) This influence is only detected by the *effect* it produces. A father says of a son, "He has never been the same since he began to associate with So-and-so." (b) We can never say *where it ends.* Fifty years ago a drunkard died, but a grandson is today a victim to drink because the taste was "born in him." (c) The influence is strongest on *those who are nearest*—brothers and comrades—as in the magnet's case. (d) It is *always being unconsciously exerted.* Note then—(1) The care we should exercise, lest we unconsciously harm others; (2) the caution we should use in entering another's sphere of influence.

Our subject, the first chapter of Ruth, admirably illustrates the power of influence. What sort of women, as regards religion, were Ruth and Orpah when Naomi first met them? (Idolatresses.) To what had their acquaintance led Ruth? (First, love for Naomi; then, belief in Naomi's God.) Had Naomi no influence upon Ruth? (A magnet will attract nickel—not, however, with the force with which it attracts iron.) And what was the ultimate result of Naomi's influence on Ruth? (She adopted Naomi's country, became the ancestress of David, and hence of the Messiah himself.)—W. D. Pavin, in Sunday School Chronicle.

Making Religion Attractive. Two young men, who had come from very different homes and out of very different surroundings, met in a city boarding-house. They became roommates and fast friends. One was an undisciplined boy, in no way vicious, but without definite principles or convictions. The other was a strong, earnest fellow who had been brought up in a small village, and had been an active worker in the home church. The two had no difficulty in finding which of them was the natural leader. They formed the same habits of life; they attended the same church; they gradually assumed definite responsibilities; and both developed into strong, useful manhood.

Looking back over his life in those days, he who had been the undisciplined boy, said: "I cannot think of any greater blessing that could have befallen me than the friendship of this young man, who had so much in common with me, but who had, too, so much that I lacked. He did for me what no teacher or pastor or employer could have done, and he did it with perfect naturalness, and, indeed, unconsciously!"

"What was the secret of this influence over you?" asked a friend. "He made his religion so wholesomely attractive," was the reply.

Religion is sometimes made most unattractive by those who profess it. Men are even repelled from the church because some who call themselves Christians are unworthy. Attractiveness is not the sole or even the chief virtue in religion, but we may be sure that people will not permanently choose to embrace it unless it has that grace. Blessed are those people who are not only good, but whose goodness is human enough and cheerful enough to attract others.—Youth's Companion.

The Soul's Atmosphere. Had we tests fine enough we would doubtless find each man's personality the centre of outreaching influences. He himself may be utterly unconscious of this exhalation of moral forces, as he is of the contagion of disease from his body. But if light is in him he shines; if darkness rules he shades; if his heart glows with love he warms; if frozen with selfishness he chills; if corrupt he poisons; if pure-hearted he cleanses. We watch with wonder the apparent flight of the sun through space, glowing upon dead planets, shortening winter and bringing summer, with birds, leaves and fruits. But that is not half so wonderful as the passage of a human heart, glowing and sparkling with ten thousand effects, as it moves through human life. The soul, like the sun, has its atmosphere, and is over against its fellows for light, warmth and transformation.

Gentle as is the atmosphere about us, it presses with a weight of fourteen pounds to the square inch. No infant's hand feels its weight; no leaf of aspen or wing of bird detects this heavy pressure, for the fluid air presses equally in all directions. Just so gentle, yet powerful, is the moral atmosphere of a good man as it presses upon and shapes his kind. He who hath made man in his own image hath endowed him with this forceful presence.

The supreme example of atmosphere and influence is Jesus Christ. His was a force mightier than intellect. Wherever he moved a light ne'er seen on land or sea shone on man. It was more than eminent beauty or supreme genius. His scepter was not through cunning of brain or craft of hand; reality was his throne. His gift cannot be bought nor commanded; but his secret and charm may be ours. Acceptance, obedience, companionship with him—these are the keys of power.—Condensed from The Investment of Influence, by Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The Book of Ruth. See pp. 27-28.

2. How does the background of the Book of Ruth compare with that of Judges?

3. The Missionary Lesson of the Book of Ruth.

4. Ruth the Decided. See chapter with this heading in Matheson's Representative Women of the Bible. Recall Victor Hugo's remark about Queen Anne, "No quality in her attained to virtue and none to vice—there was in her so much that was indecisive," and debate Virgil's dictum, "An ever-varying and changeable thing is woman."

5. The contributions of "foreigners" to the national greatness of our country.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do we have two books each of Samuel and Kings? 2. What is the meaning of the last part of the first verse of our next lesson? 3. What does verse 7 mean? 4. What does the proverbial expression in verse 11 mean? 5. Do you approve of Eli's words in verse 18? 6. Have men felt as divinely "called" to become ministers or missionaries as Samuel felt called in this incident? 7. What does Paul say in 2 Tim. 3.14, 15 about the early training of Timothy? 8. What does Prov. 22.6 say about the training of children? 9. How was its truth proved in the case of Samuel? 10. In the case of Eli's sons? 11. How early should the religious training of a child begin? 12. Who are responsible for the religious training of children?

LESSON V—MAY 2

THE BOY SAMUEL

Golden Text

My son, give me thy heart;
And let thine eyes delight in my ways. Proverbs 23.26

LESSON 1 Samuel 1.24-28; 3.1-21 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 84

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 1.1-23; 2.1-36

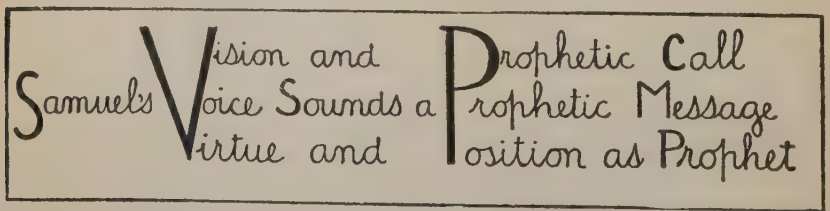
1 SAMUEL 3.1 And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), 3 and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*, in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was; 4 that Jehovah called Samuel: and he said, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6 And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8 And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not.

19 And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. 21 And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. SAMUEL'S VISION AND PROPHETIC CALL, verses 1-9. The Hebrew word translated *child* is applied in the Bible to an infant and also to a man of forty. Josephus says that *the child Samuel* had just completed his twelfth year when *the word of Jehovah came to him.* If so, then he was the age that Jesus was when in the temple he dedicated himself to his Father's business. Samuel *ministered unto Jehovah before Eli:* he helped Eli in the service of the

temple, and seems to have been his special attendant. One of Samuel's duties was the opening of the house of God every morning, verse 15. It was at a time when *the word of Jehovah was precious*, or *rare*, as the marginal translation reads. The word of Jehovah was proclaimed by the prophets: during the preceding period of the judges only two prophets are mentioned in the Book of Judges, 4.4 and 6.8.

It came to pass at that time, that Jehovah called Samuel: between these two statements several observations are thrown in parenthetically, to explain the situation. It was when Eli *was laid down in his place,* that aged Eli whose *eyes had begun to wax* (grow) *dim,* so that he could not see, and when *the lamp of God was not yet gone out*—the temple lamp was filled with olive oil and was kept burning from evening to morning, Ex. 27.20, 21, and the time was therefore early dawn—and when *Samuel was laid down to sleep, in the temple of Jehovah.* The Hebrew word translated *temple* means *dwelling-place:* it is translated *palace* when it refers to the dwelling-place of an earthly ruler. The "dwelling-place of Jehovah" was at this time the tabernacle, for it was long before Solomon's temple was built. *Where the ark of God was.* Grammatically this clause may refer to the verb "was laid down," or to the noun "temple": if the former is correct, Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary itself; if the latter (which is the more probable), he slept in an apartment or tent near by which was reserved for the use of priests and Levites. We know that in the wilderness Moses and Aaron slept in front of the tabernacle.

At that time, God made himself known to Samuel. And Samuel said, *Here am I.* Compare Gen. 22.1; Is. 6.8. "God often calls us, but generally we are not at home" (Abbé Roux). Thinking that Eli had called him, Samuel twice ran to him and said, *Here am I; for thou calledst me,* and each time he received the same word, *I called not; lie down again.*

Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah. He "knew" him as did all devout Israelites, but he had as yet received no direct revelation of the Divine Spirit. *Jehovah called Samuel again the third time.* "The Bible throughout builds upon one great assumption. It postulates the reality of the divine communication."

And Eli perceived that God had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. "Though Eli knew that the seals of sacred office were being taken from himself that they might be placed in those youthful hands, yet, without a trace of hurt pride, he took the boy's hand and led him into the Divine Presence. This is our greatest office, to put every soul into direct telephonic communication with the secret place of the Most High" (Meyer).

II. SAMUEL'S FIRST PROPHETIC MESSAGE, verses 10-18. *And Jehovah came and stood.* The Voice became to Samuel the Vision; see verse 15. *And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel.* The next chapter tells what this "thing" was, the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the capture of the ark, and the death of Eli's sons and of Eli himself. *At which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.* A proverbial expression meaning that it shall create great astonishment or alarm. *In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house.* Read 2.27-36. The preliminary judgment on the wicked sons followed swiftly, but that on Eli's house came some twenty or thirty years later. *I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. Judge* here means *punish.* Eli was not ignorant of his sons' wickedness. The iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children, but so, also, are the iniquities of the children visited upon the fathers who neglected their duty to their children. For the guilt of Eli see the next lesson.

In the morning Samuel *opened the doors of the house of Jehovah* as was his wont, but *feared to show Eli the vision.* But Eli called him and asked what Jehovah had told him: *Hide it not from me,* Eli solemnly warned him. *And Samuel told him every whit,* everything. "God calls us to duty, and the only right answer is obedience" (Hodges).

It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good, was Eli's comment. Eli was a good man, submissive to God's will, but he was a thoroughly weak man, and his words here show more the vice of weakness than the virtue of

pious resignation. He would have fulfilled God's will better had he prayed for mercy and then taken his sons severely in hand.

III. SAMUEL'S POSITION AS A PROPHET, verses 19-21. *And Samuel grew and Jehovah was with him.* Compare the words of Luke 2.52 about the Child Jesus, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." *And did let none of his words fall to the ground.* His words were all true, for, as Matthew Henry says, when God calls he qualifies; when he qualifies, he calls. *And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba*—an expression often used for "from one end of the land to the other," "throughout all Canaan" *knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah.* A prophet was one who spoke for Jehovah. God had chosen Samuel, child though Samuel was, to declare his condemnation of Eli's house, and therefore all Israel knew that Samuel was a prophet to whom *Jehovah revealed himself in Shiloh.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli, verse 1. In Oriental churches—Orthodox, Armenian, Coptic, or Latin—innumerable boys today are serving the Lord before Elis, even as the boy Samuel served in Shiloh. They sweep the temple, kindle the fire, light the lamps and tapers, hold a lighted candle before the priest while he reads, and otherwise do the priest's bidding. Some of these boys may become priests when they reach their majority and receive ordination, but until then they are lay ministers or servants in the house of God, under the priests. Rich and noble Moslems from India come to Syria for the high privilege of serving (for a season) in any capacity under any of a certain class of priests.—Mrs. Ghosnr-el-Howie, in Sunday School Times.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In what lessons have we been told that God spoke to some one? Whom in our lessons has God called for a special service? How does God speak to one now?

Israel under Eli. When first we hear of Eli he is already an old man. For a long time he had been both priest and judge, but he had ruled with a weak hand, and apparently, at the time of our lesson, his two prodigal sons, Hophni and Phinchas, were acting as priests. Politically and morally, the nation was far from prosperous. Deborah and Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah had repulsed the Midianites and Ammonites from the east, and quieted the Canaanite tribes on the north; Samson had made fitful efforts to break the power which the Philistines from the southwest had gained over the Israelites, but they were too powerful an enemy to be thus vanquished, and their invasions continued. Eli, though pious and well-meaning, was fatally weak. He had no power over the atrocious doings of his sons, nor the moral decay of Israel.

The times were out of joint and a wise head and strong arm were needed to set them right. These qualifications Samuel possessed and God called him to be the last and greatest of the judges, the first of the prophets and the connecting link between the period of the Judges and that of the Monarchy.

The Child Samuel Dedicated to God. As Eli was seated one day before the Tabernacle he saw a woman prostrate herself and move her lips without uttering a sound, and he jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. It was Hannah praying for a son and promising to give him unto the Lord; her prayer was heard and when the child was born she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of Jehovah." She fulfilled her vow by bringing him to Shiloh, and leaving him there with Eli, the high priest, and thereafter she visited him only once a year, and then she brought him a little robe. The child grew and increased in favor with Jehovah, and also with men.

The Books of Samuel. See pages 28-30 of our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Samuel was born at *Ramah,* in Samaria, and it was a journey of twelve miles to *Shiloh,* the religious capital of Israel, where he was educated. Shiloh lies east of the central highway which travelers cross in going from Samaria to Galilee. Ruins now crown the summit of the rounded, rocky hill which stands out on the plain, encircled by deep valleys save on the south. The

Mohammedans claim that the mosque which one sees from afar occupies the site of the Tabernacle, but back of the hill a leveled place cut in the rock where there is also the semblance of an altar may have been the spot where the Tabernacle rested when Samuel served in the sanctuary.

Dan was the northern frontier town. Its earlier name was Laish and it belonged to the Phœnicians until 600 of the tribe of Dan took possession of it, as told in the Book of Judges. *Beersheba* is 27 miles south of Hebron on the great highway between Canaan and Egypt. Proverbially it was the southwest frontier town, but several towns of the tribe of Simeon lay farther south. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob each spent some years at Beersheba. Wells dug in Abraham's day are still to be found here.

Assign paragraphs 7-9 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

What a bugle call for child-study is this! We see here the relationship between the child and his teacher, and between the child and God. The parents laid the foundation of Samuel's religious training, and Eli the teacher continued it. Eli's part shows that he knew the child and he knew God. He led the child to a knowledge of God. What knowledge of a child does the Sunday-school teacher need?

Read carefully these words condensed from an article by Mr. W. Charles Piggott in the Sunday School Chronicle:

Samuel was open and responsive to the spiritual world, but he did not understand either it or himself. The hour might have passed, the whisper of the Divine voice have gone unheeded, and shades of the prison house closed about the growing boy, had there not been at his side a man of experience, a wise master. "Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child." He was able to interpret the mystery of this young soul and to direct its response. So stands declared the highest and the most delicate of our task in our contact with children. We are *teachers* in the ordinary sense of the word; we have a definite body of instruction to impart to them. To make them acquainted with the Bible, to give them an intelligent interest in it, a love for it, a sense of its value as a road book in the pilgrimage of life, is no small undertaking. We are *educators* in the more exact sense; we have to help in the unfolding of the child's own life, in the development and use of its powers, in the formation of its character and moral habits. But beyond this we are to be *interpreters* of the opening spiritual life of the child. God's approach to the child is not limited to our ministries, whether as parents or teachers.

Ever in the shadow of the child's life, in its wonder and delight, in its joy and fear, in the deep things that sometimes rise from its heart, stands God ever calling. It is our part to interpret the hour and the method of the Divine approach, and this aspect of our task demands more of us than any other. There is no text-book for this. Herein we are cast back upon the wealth of our own experience. We are often accustomed to say that in the last issue it is personality that tells in our work. That is true, but it means more than we vaguely convey by the word personality, more than the indefinable charm and attraction of manners. What finally counts is the wealth of personal religion, the individuality of experience by which the treasures of the spiritual life have been made our own. The things which are spiritually discerned can only be seen by those who can compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must know the Bible, we must know something of psychology and pedagogy in order to help the child, but to understand the deepest nature of the child we must know God.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A BOY WHO LISTENED AND OBEYED

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There are several beautiful pictures representing the Boy Samuel. One is by Opie (Wilde No. 471); another by Tissot (No. 232), but the most familiar and most beautiful of all is Sir Joshua Reynold's (Wilde No. 417. If possible give copies of this penny picture). I think perhaps this is one of the most familiar pictures that has ever been painted. It represents the Boy Samuel kneeling in his bed and listening for the Voice. Whose Voice?

Samuel Listened and Obeyed. Samuel showed a fine spirit on this night

of alarms and mysteries. He was not afraid of the dark. He did not get cross because he was called twice for nothing, as it seemed. He obeyed his leader, Eli. He was reverent towards God. He was full of sorrow for an old man and was loath to tell him the bad news, but he obeyed God's command.

We speak of this incident as Samuel's *call.* What was it? It was not a call to be up and doing, to carry a message to an army or nation. It was a call to listen and learn. David as a lad had a call to go and fight a giant. Samuel had only a call to listen. You would like to have a call to do some big thing. Perhaps you will have such a call by and by, but the first call any one gets from God is just to listen to him, learn of him, sit at his feet and find out what he means and what he wants. You have such a call now.

Samuel made *mistakes:* what were they? He thought the voice was Eli's. Thinking the aged prophet was ill and wanted him, Samuel rushed off to Eli's chamber. And when Eli denied that he had called him, Samuel couldn't credit it. The second and the third time he had the same impression—he was sure it was Eli calling him. Do you think Samuel was stupid to make such a mistake? It is a mistake which we all make. It is only father, or mother, or teacher, or minister, giving us a bit of their mind, telling us to do right, we think. But it is God talking to us through him. Whenever anyone talks to you about duty or truth or conduct or religion—it is God calling to you.

Think about Samuel's *answer.* It was Eli who enlightened him. Eli said to him, "It is God calling you, my boy. Go back and lie down, and the next time the Voice comes say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" And Samuel did so. What did his answer express? Willingness and obedience. It meant, "I am ready to hear what you have to say, and ready to do what you tell me to do. Let me know what you wish, and it shall be done." He couldn't say more than that, could he? Are you ready to say as much?

How a Girl Listened for God's Voice. Two little girls said their prayers together one night. At the close one jumped right up, but the other knelt quietly by the bed. "What were you waiting for, sister?" "I was listening for God to answer," said her sister. "Don't you remember Miss Josepha said we mustn't hurry over our prayers? She said that it was like the little boy that knocked at her door once, and then ran away before she could open it. So now I always wait to see if God wants to say anything to me." "Did he say anything to you tonight, sister?" asked the other, looking startled. "You know," was the answer in a low tone "we said, 'God bless all my friends,' and right away I thought of Sadie Burwell, 'cause we had a fuss today; and while I waited God said, 'Tell her you are sorry'"—Anna L. Dreyer.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: James 1.22a.

We may listen to the voice of God speaking within, in the temple of the heart. —F. B. Meyer.

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what he has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand.—Edward Everett Hale.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does 1 S. 2.12 say about Eli's sons? 2. What did we learn last week that Eli had failed to do for his sons? (1 S. 3.13.) 3. Was Eli a good man? 4. Was he a good father? 5. What does Prov. 10.1 say? 6. What does Prov. 22.6 say? 7. Why was the ark brought into battle? 8. What did the Philistines think about it? 9. What happened to the ark? 10. What happened to Eli's sons? 11. How did Eli meet his death?

Note-Book Work. IV. The Lesson Title; a statement about why Samuel was in the temple; four statements about what he heard and what he did; a statement about Samuel's obedience; the Golden Text.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: TRAINING FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

Additional Material: 1 Samuel 1.1 to 2.21; 1 Tim. 4.13-15.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There are four letters with which every British boy or girl is familiar—O. H. M. S. They mean "On His Majesty's Service." His Majesty is King George. The letters are painted on the autos in which soldiers go from place to place, and they lend urgency as well as

dignity to the calling. Samuel was early called to the service of the King of Kings. How?

Dedicated to God's Service. Hannah dedicated her babe to God's service. So parents today dedicate their children to God when they have them baptized. As soon as Samuel was old enough to be taken away from home, his father and mother took him to Shiloh and left him there to be educated as a prophet of God. Once a year only they went to see him, for they had given him to God's service and they would not claim him oftener. For several years there was no conscious self-dedication to God on the part of Samuel. Unquestioningly he aided Eli, he helped in the temple service, and he learned about God. Up to a certain time his mind was merely receptive. Then came a day when he began to ask himself questions. What did it all mean? Who is God? Could he ever know God for himself? "Shall I take the faith in which I have been trained, and put it within my heart, and from now on let it be my very life?" Then it was that he heard God's voice speaking to his soul. At first he thought it was a human voice—that of his aged teacher—and then he knew that it was the Divine Voice, that God himself was speaking to him. This was Samuel's conscious self-dedication to God and God's service.

Young America, What are You Going to Do? Girls and boys of America, you are the hope of the world! We have a rich country. We have not been touched by war, not touched as Belgium and France and England have been touched, clutched, throttled, flung down by it! You who are ten, twelve, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen or seventeen now were not closely touched by it at all. Your brothers may have gone to fight for freedom on the sea or in France; but you, Bill and Jack and George and Mary and Susan and Jane stayed home, to do—what? That's the great question. At the bottom, it's the greatest question confronting this dear country of ours.

You are the hope of the world! That isn't empty rhetoric. That is hard fact. But, you say, there are girls and boys in other countries scarcely touched by the War; in India, for instance, in Japan, in China, millions of them; there are girls and boys in Norway and Sweden and Spain and Holland and South America. Why, you say, are we the world's hope? Why must we carry that responsibility? We'd rather not, you say.

You can't evade it, Young America. The stars have conspired against you. Destiny, which made your country rich and gave her great leaders in time of need, and helped her to build a magnificent republic out of many races and many creeds; Destiny that brought you to the light under the Eagle and the Stars and Stripes; Destiny, that chose America to the greatest laboratory, the greatest testing-ground of democracy in the world; Destiny, Fortune, God, laid on you the privilege and the responsibility of being the hope of a world in tears. You can carry this responsibility and be glorious. You cannot ignore it.

You are the hope of the world! And are you going on dancing and spinning in your car and going to the movies and the music shows and loafing at street corners and reading the sporting page and dolling up your figure and your face? Or are you going to wake up suddenly to the emptiness and the ugliness of all this, and throw it aside, crying: "There are big things in this world, and, by all that's clean in me and true in me and brave in me and American in me, I'm going out to find them and give my heart and soul to them and make myself a part of them; so that, as far as I am concerned, the hope of the world shall be fulfilled!"—Condensed from You are the Hope of the World, by Hermann Hagedorn.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. A spirit tremblingly responsive to the heavenly voice is the grandest gift of all.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Lying at the feet of childhood are blossoms of virtue and achievement.—Charles H. Brent.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do the Books of Samuel tell us as to their writers? 2. What good qualities had Eli? 3. Was he a good father? 4. What should a father do for his son? 5. What should a son do for his father? 6. Of what sins were Eli's sons guilty? 7. What does our Golden Text say about sowing and reaping? 8. What does Paul in his letter to the Galatians say about sowing and reaping? (Gal. 6.7.)

Note-Book Work. IV. The Life of Samuel. Part I. How God Revealed Himself to Samuel. Add a characterization of Samuel by Eli.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: RELIGIOUS CAPACITIES AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN

Additional Material: Proverbs 22.6; Ecclesiastes 12.1; Luke 2.52; 2 Timothy 3.14, 15.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "The tendency of the day is for children and parents to have less and less in common. In my youth parents and children played together, and went to church together. We see as little of our children as possible nowadays, to the great loss of us all. But at least we can go to God's house together on the Lord's day! The children would soon enjoy going if it were a family custom. But going to church has above all a religious value. And let me tell you, if you were setting deliberately about abolishing the church altogether at the end of another generation, the surest way of doing so would be to let that generation grow up without the habit of church attendance. Whether or not you help them to form that habit certainly seems to me important!"

These words are from a dialogue in The Youth's Companion about the Church Habit. We study today the church habit of one who became the greatest of the judges and the first of the long line of prophets.

Religious Capacities of Children. The face of a child—this is the theme for artists. The mind of a child,—this is the theme of psychologists and pedagogists. The health of a child—this is the theme for physicians and sanitarians and industrial reformers. The religion of a child,—this is our theme and how important it is!

What is religion? It is the life of God in the human soul. So we are dealing with the soul of a child. And the practical problem is, how can the child be brought under the dominion of an Unseen Power? How can he accustom himself to the control of that Power, to "walk by faith," to build a stately mansion for his soul? Religion is the "habit" of the soul, the garment woven by desire and thought and choice.

We have in this book the story of the child Samuel serving the Lord before Eli. Eli was the priest. Samuel was the altar-boy. In a sense, he was an ancient type of the modern office boy. He kept the tabernacle clean; he filled the lamps with olive oil, and trimmed the wicks; he opened the doors to the sunrise, and did innumerable little things, such as a boy with willing hands could do. The simple record is, "He served the Lord." So he was religious. Then his religion was largely obedience. But back of his obedience was that which accounts for it—reverence.

Samuel was the child of Elkanah and Hannah, dedicated to God in prayer before his birth. Eli called the child "a loan lent to the Lord." Out of a home-atmosphere of gratitude and devotion came this child. Out of such an atmosphere and environment have come many such servants of the Lord: Chrysostom, whose mother regarded him as "a loan unto the Lord"; Augustine, whom his mother followed patiently and prayerfully until he was obedient to the vision of Christ; and the Wesleys, whose mother, with many children, was not too busy to talk with each one of these alone at least once a week about religious things.

It would be hard to say when Samuel first came consciously within the sweep of spiritual forces. He may not himself have known when he first yielded, of choice, to the power of an unseen world. There was the martyr, Polycarp, who, dying, cried out, when asked to renounce his faith and revile Christ, "Eighty and six years have I served him and he has never done me wrong. How then can I revile my Savior and my King?" If he had been serving Christ for eighty-six years he must have begun his service as a child.

Samuel's parents chose for him in infancy, but there came an hour when he had to choose for himself. That hour came in the stillness of a night, when that which had hitherto been an echo became a voice, and he answered, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. Charles C. Albertson.

A True Incident. A great storm was raging overhead, lightning flashed in the sombre sky. Round the everlasting hills encircling us reverberated the thunder. It was a beautiful but awe-inspiring scene. In the midst of the storm a little girl asked, "What is the thunder, mammy?" "I think it is God's voice," was the mother's answer. A terrific clap followed, and the child was

seen to bow her head. The mother called her to her side, "Why do you bow your head when the thunder comes?" she asked in her elderly blind ignorance. "I'm answering God," was the reply, given with a crimson flush, flooding from brow to chin. "And what do you say, darling?" "I say what Samuel said," the child replied: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."—The Quiver.

The Making of Leaders. When Germany began to look with something like interest at the American forces as a factor in the war, she made light of the whole matter and declared with emphasis that even though the numbers of men might reach into the hundreds of thousands in time, their service would be ineffective because they would be unofficered—that America was without officers and could not make them, lacking both time and authority.

But America made officers. She developed and created leaders on the sea who were able with great credit to cope with the long-trained enemy. She developed and created leaders in the air who made a record of which any nation on earth might be proud. She officered her troops with brave, heroic, disciplined young leaders of their fellows, capable of assuming command as bidden, when bidden, or of following commands of superiors without fear or question.

How could America perform this task which in days of ordinary events would have been termed more than a miracle? She had to do it. She realized that the hour had come when certain things must be done. She turned to youth with a plain statement of her need, an honest picture of her crisis. She appealed to emotions that were dormant. Patriotic fervor awakened, high desires burst into flame, self-sacrifice was born, youth was inspired. Then she took the inspired youth and put him into training for leadership. She did not lay before him at first plans of battles, officers' vocabularies, the mysteries of airplane formations, battalion movements, naval commanders' duties, and then inspire him to use the knowledge. She inspired him to serve and then put him through such intensive courses in ways and means of service as no previous candidates for leadership have ever met.

So leaders have always been developed and made. Washington, Lincoln, Webster, Phillips, Grant, Jackson, Lee—the analysis of their lives and service reveals the process. There came the moment when they faced Fact; then something flamed within them, then they bent every energy toward acquiring the knowledge that helped them to meet the Fact.

Believing the premise of this study to be absolutely true, I turn to face a Fact that the physical, moral and spiritual life of the childhood and youth of America faces a crisis. Without leadership I do not see how that crisis can be met, and leadership is lacking. It must be developed or made—and immediately, for the task will not wait.

But leadership can be developed and made. To confine the challenge to one organization, the one I believe that ought first to meet all challenges for human good, the Church, I will say that the Church has dimly realized for years the need of leadership and the fact that it, in common with the rest of society, was failing to make it. But the Church did not realize it to the point of action and it does not now. The Church does not face Fact. America ought to be able to look to the Church for the inspiring leaders of childhood and youth.

The Church ought to launch a campaign of inspiration for service to youth and to use every available bit of machinery, creating more where necessary, to train that leadership. The American college ought to be a place where such a campaign might find material. The privileged girls and young women of America ought to furnish a field for such a campaign.—Condensed from an article in The Pilgrim Teacher, by Miss Margaret Slattery.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. What is being done in our Sunday-school to train teachers for leadership?

2. The penalty for amiable weakness.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do the books of Samuel tell us as to their writers? 2. What was Israel's sin in bringing the ark into battle? 3. What is historically wrong about the Philistines' statement in verse 8? 4. What became of the ark after this? 5. What sort of sons were Eli's? 6. Was Eli responsible for their sins? 7. Do some good men and women have wicked children? 8. Do some *good parents* have wicked children? 9. Does a parent's duty end when he has rightly instructed a child? 10. Should parents honor their children as much as children should honor their parents?

ELI AND HIS SONS

(May be used with Temperance Applications)

Golden Text

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6.23

LESSON 1 Samuel 2.12-17; 4.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 4.10-27

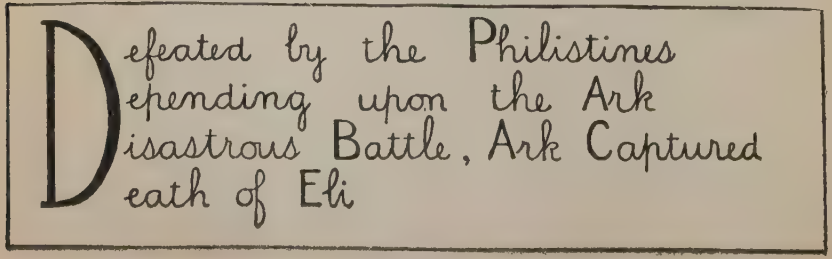
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 2.22-36; 3.10-14; 4.19 to 6.18

1 SAMUEL 4.5 And when the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. 6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of Jehovah was come into the camp. 7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. 8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness. 9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. 10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter! for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. 11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. 13 And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. 14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man hasted, and came and told Eli. 15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, so that he could not see. 16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my son? 17 And he that brought the tidings answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. 18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that *Eli* fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO DEFEAT THE PHILISTINES, verses 1, 2. The Philistines held the richest plain in the land and were strong in weapons and in wealth. For a long time they had been carrying their incursions into the Israelite territory and keeping the Israelites in perpetual fear. Samson's exploits against them had been undertaken for private rather than national reasons, and they afforded only slight and temporary relief to the Israelites. The Philistines virtually made themselves master of the whole country and finally succeeded in disarming the Israelites. These tyrants would not allow the Israelites to work metals, "for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears." When their agricultural implements needed repairing or their axes needed sharpening, the Israelites were forced to carry them to a Philistine smith. Before Samuel grew up and assumed control there was no leader strong enough to contend with this great enemy.

Under Eli *Israel went out against the Philistines to battle,* but this attempt at resistance had a fatal termination. The place where the Israelites encamped was called *Ebenezer,* which means "Stone of help," a name which Samuel later gave to the place where he set up memorial stones, saying, "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us," 1 S. 7.12. See the Geographical Background.

II. ISRAEL SINS IN TRUSTING IN THE ARK, INSTEAD OF IN GOD, verses 3-5. Upon the return of the defeated army, the elders of Israel exclaimed, *Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us this day before the Philistines?* "If they meant this as an inquiry into the cause of God's displeasure, they needed not go far to find out. It was plain enough; Israel had sinned, though they were not willing to see it and own it. But it rather seems that they expostulated boldly with God about it, and disputed the matter with him. 'Wherefore shall we, that are Israelites, be smitten before the Philistines? How absurd and unjust it is!'"(Matthew Henry). *Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of Jehovah,* they counselled. The ark contained the tables of the law and was the symbol of the presence of God himself, and the proof of his promises. Read Ex. 25.10-22. *That it may save us out of the hand of our enemy.* Note the *it:* their trust was in the Ark, not in the God of the ark. They may have recalled the taking of the ark about the walls of Jericho, or they may have thought that God could not let the ark be captured, and therefore he would have to let them win the battle. It was *the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who siteth* (or, *is enthroned,* RVm.) *above the cherubim.* "This does not imply that there were figures of cherubim upon the ark (1 K. 8.6), but refers to the general glory of Jehovah. The cherubim are heavenly beings regarded as standing in Jehovah's presence (compare the seraphim of Isa. 6), and, in Ezek. 1.10, as of composite form. Compare also Ps. 18.10. In Solomon's temple two winged cherubim stood in the most Holy Place (1 K. 6.24)."(One Volume Commentary.) *The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were there with the ark.* The thought is that their presence prevented the expected effect. Recall last week's lesson in which retribution is prophesied because of the wickedness of these two sons.

And when the ark of the covenant came into the camp all Israel shouted with a great shout. "They were making more of the ark than of the Lord. Their religion was degenerating into superstition. I become superstitious whenever the means of worship are permitted to eclipse the Object of worship. It can be so with prayer. I may use prayer as a magic minister to protect me from invasive ills. I do not pray because I desire fellowship with the Father, but because I should not feel safe without it. The ark is more than the Lord. It can be so with a crucifix. A crucifix may become a mere talisman, and so supplant the Lord. I may wear the thing and have no fellowship with the Person. Let me not be satisfied with the ark, but let me seek him whose name is holy and whose nature is love"(Jowett).

III. THE SMITING OF ISRAEL, THE CAPTURE OF THE ARK, AND THE DEATH OF ELI'S SONS, verses 6-11. *These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness,* was the fear of the Philistines when they learned that the ark was in the camp of Israel. "They were as much out in their history as in their divinity," remarks Matthew Henry. The reference is to the plagues that the Egyptians suffered in their own land when they refused to allow the Hebrews under Moses to leave Egypt. However, "in the wilderness" is thought by some scholars to be an erroneous reading; a slight alteration in the Hebrew would give "and with pestilence," *The Philis-*

tines fought, and Israel was smitten. The presence of the ark, with all its sacred associations, did not save from defeat the faithless people, who did not worship the God of the ark. *And the ark of God was taken.* See the Historical background. *And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.* Eli, who failed to restrain his sons, and the two sons, who were given up to greed and licentiousness (read 2.12-17), were at the head of the nation, and they were in large measure responsible for the demoralization of the people, for like priest, like people; the punishment threatened in our last lesson was fulfilled, and the Philistines were God's agents in the matter.

IV. THE DEATH OF ELI, verses 12-18. When an advance runner came to Shiloh with news of the result of the battle, Eli was watching for him, *for his heart trembled for the ark of God.* Probably he had not approved of its being taken into battle, but with his customary weakness had yielded to the elders. Upon learning the messenger's evil tidings, the aged man *fell off his seat backwards* and broke his neck.

Egyptian Ark Carried in a Procession of Rameses

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

That it may come among us and save us out of the hand of our enemies, verse 3. They treated the ark as a sort of charm, even as the heathen people do their idols which they carry into battle.

With his clothes rent and with earth upon his head, verse 12. Before he uttered a word these signs of grief proclaimed his sorrowful message to all who saw him.

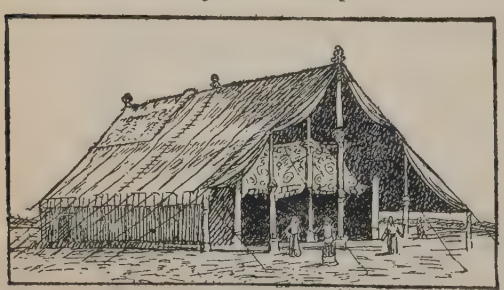
Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside, verse 13. "Public magistrates made the entrance gates of cities, with their spacious recesses, informal courts for the administration of justice. Eli's seat was an official chair, somewhat like those used by ancient Egyptian judges, high, carved and often ornamental, but without a back."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Against what enemies had the Israelites fought, and under what judges? Where was Shiloh? What was kept in the tabernacle there? What warning from God had come to Eli through Samuel?

The Fulfillment of Last Week's Promise. There is no mention of Samuel in this lesson. Last week we learned how culpably weak Eli had been with his sons, how wicked the latter were, and how they would reap what they had sown. Today, retribution falls.

Ebenezer and Aphek. Their positions are not known with certainty. Ebenezer was somewhere in the tribe of Judah where the mountains descend to the Plain of Sharon. The word *Aphek* means "strength," or "firmness," and was given to several strongholds.



The Tabernacle

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: ELI AND HIS SONS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Tell the whole story in four scenes. (1) the battle; (2) the surprise and fear at Shiloh—the talk about what could be done, and the decision to take the ark into battle; (3) the result—the shouts of the Israelites, the wise counsel of the Philistines, the Philistine Victory, the capture of the ark, and the death of the two wicked sons of Eli; (4) Eli watching with eager eyes for the coming of the messenger, the brief words between the two, the backward fall

and death of the aged priest. Recall last week's lesson, and every pupil will readily feel that the punishment of Eli's sons was just, that it was in accordance with the fitness of things.

The Wages of Sin is Death. *A good man sometimes has bad sons.* Eli was a weak man, but his life and character were without blemish. He was a good man and a good priest. But we cannot call him a good father, because he did not do what was best for his sons, he did not punish them when as boys they did what was wrong. And they grew up to be bad men. He failed to train his children in the way they should go.

A good office had a bad tenant. The sons of Eli held an office that was sacred, that was honored by the people and gave them every opportunity for doing good. Yet they were bad men, utterly unfit to be the priests of God. Sometimes a young man says that he holds a fine position with good people and he couldn't help being good. But a good position will not always prove a safeguard against evil. Goodness comes from within, not from without. If the heart is not in the right place, no office, and no other restraint, will hold one back from evil.

Good people may be spoiled by bad leaders. The people who had honored God and his laws, who had been earnest in all their religious duties, soon saw that these two priests did not care about God, did not honor him, and they began to be careless and to do wrong themselves. "It's nobody's concern but mine if I am bad and get into trouble," a young man says. Oh, but it is. His evil hurts and wrongs other people, sets them on the wrong path. One can't be bad without infecting other people.

A good start may have a bad finish. These two men had a fine start—a good home, a splendid position, the honor and respect of the people, everything to help and encourage them to lead an honorable life. But they lost everything—goodness, respect, character, happiness. They led the people astray and at last perished in a shameful and disgraceful battle which dishonored God and resulted in the triumph of his enemies. Aim for a good start and a good finish as well.

Train up a Child in the Way he Should Go, and when he is Old, he will not Depart from it. "Whenever folks want me to do things I don't want to do they say that verse at me!" said Joe. Joe frowned as he said these words, then he smiled, and Grandma, who heard the words, smiled too. "I know just how you feel," said Grandma, and Joe looked surprised and pleased. "It isn't pleasant to have verses said *AT* you. It isn't even pleasant to be prayed at, but it is sweet to be prayed *FOR*. It is also sweet to talk verses over, and to have them said *TO* you once in a while, not *AT* you."

"That's what I mean!" said Joe.

"I thought so," replied Grandma, and she smiled again as she looked into Joe's eyes, so like his father's big brown ones. "Do you remember how you admired the boy scouts out at camp?" Joe nodded. He was going to join the boy scouts as soon as he was old enough. "Do you remember when that little girl was hurt what those boys did? Three boy scouts saw the little girl fall off the wagon. She fainted. One boy ran to her, and began to work over her. Another boy ran for water. The third boy went for the ambulance. Not one of the boys said a word. They just *WORKED*. Each one knew what to do and how to do it. Each one knew what his work was. No time was lost. They were well—"

"TRAINED!" finished Joe, drawing a long breath.

"Yes, and because they were well trained that little girl had the best of care at once, and no mistake was made. When those boys grow up they will not depart—"

"They won't forget it!" shouted Joe. "I see, Grandma! I understand! You have to be trained in whole 'steen dozens of things while you are little so you won't forget them when you grow up!"

"That's just about it," said Grandma, laughing. "Do the right things over and over till they get to be good habits, and you will grow up to be as fine a man as—"

"FATHER!" shouted Joe.—Picture Story Paper.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Proverbs 6.20.

If you play with sin, you will reap ruin.—Dr. Chapman.

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As the plant grows out of the seed, as the man grows out of the child, so do the punishments which God imposes come out of the sins which men have done. —John Byles.

It is not just as we take it—
This mystical world of ours.
Life's field will yield—as we make it—
A harvest of thorns or of flowers.—Alice Cary.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What sin had the people of Israel committed? 2. What did Samuel tell them to do? 3. How did they obey? 4. Where did they have a great meeting? 5. What did they there say to Samuel? 6. What did Samuel pray? 7. For what did he pray? 8. How was his prayer answered? 9. Why do you pray? 10. For what do you pray?

Note-Book Work. V. The Lesson Title; a statement about the wickedness of Eli's sons; a statement about Eli as a father; the fate of the sons; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: SOWING AND REAPING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Here is a leaf from an old, old story. Lokman the Wise was once sent by his master to sow oats in a certain field in Arabia. In due time his master saw barley in the ear there, and demanded an explanation of his slave's conduct. "I sowed barley," was the reply, "but I hoped and prayed that I should see a harvest of oats." "How dared you play the fool on a matter of such importance?" cried the indignant master. Lokman answered: "Sir, you are constantly sowing in the world the seeds of evil, and yet you expect to reap the fruits of virtue in the resurrection day; wherefore I thought I might have a harvest of oats from a sowing of barley."

What did Paul say about sowing and reaping? "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The kind of harvest depends upon the kind of seed sown, in the natural and in the spiritual world alike. What kind of seed had the sons of Eli sown?

The Sowing that Israel Reaped. There were two causes that led to the defeat of the Israelites. They trusted in the ark itself to bring them success in battle, but they thought little about God whom the ark symbolized. And there was open sin in the ranks of the leaders. The sons of Eli were base men; they knew not Jehovah, 1 S. 2.12. The next few verses make definite charges against them: they were gluttonous, avaricious and irreverent men. As priests they were entitled to an allotted portion of the meat offered in sacrifice (Lev. 7.31-34), but they were not content therewith and demanded more. Moreover, they demanded that their claims be satisfied first. The blood and the fat were to be consumed on the altar immediately after slaughtering (Ex. 23.18), but they claimed their share before this had been done. And the sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah; for the men despised the offering of Jehovah, 1 S. 2.17. Read 1 S. 2.27-36. Those who despise the offering and God's representatives through whom it is offered will naturally come to think lightly of God himself. Them that honor me I will honor, said Jehovah, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 S. 2.30.

The Sowing that Germany Reaped. The Judge of all the earth has done right. Clouds and darkness may be round about him for a day, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. He has made bare his holy arm and has gotten himself the victory. The will to power, the philosophy of force, has now been fully tried under more favorable conditions than ever before in the history of the race. The German people were powerful, they were united, they were prosperous, they were intelligent, they were prepared to the sewing on of the last button, and they had at their fingertips all the latest methods of scientific management. Yet they have miserably failed. He that sitteth in the heavens has laughed at their gospel of materialism. The will to power, with its open contempt for moral principle and, for the spiritual value at stake, does not work in a world ruled by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For a miniature of the Day of Judgment look at Germany in this hour of her humiliation! God is not mocked. Whatsoever men and nations sow, that they also reap. The nation that sows to its flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

The Almighty does not settle his accounts at the end of each month, but nothing is overlooked, nothing is forgotten; and when the final reckoning is made up neither men nor nations come forth until they have paid the uttermost farthing. He shall judge the world in righteousness and shall break in pieces the oppressor. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and his enemies shall lick the dust. He shall redeem the souls of his servants from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Congregationalist.

The Fruit of the Vine. As a boy I was very fond of watermelon, but I lived in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains where the frosts came so early that the fruit could not ripen. In the fall of the year, however, I used to go out in my father's garden where the Hubbard squashes were growing and scan the vines longingly. Sometimes I would discover a squash that in shape, looks and color resembled the melon I longed for. Then my heart would bound, for who knew but that after all some fine morning I would find my heart's desire growing on a squash vine. Alas! I never did, and one day I learned how foolish I had been. Yet do you know, boys and girls, there are many others just as foolish. Those who think they can seek evil surroundings despite their blighting influences, and develop character that the frosts that destroy the soul growth make impossible. Or again who are selfish, deceitful, unkind, lacking love, and yet expect from these vines to gather the fruit of true manhood and womanhood. It is just as foolish as expecting to gather watermelons from squash vines, for like produces like. If you want manly and womanly character, you must plant the right seed where right conditions make growth possible. —John L. Holden, in The Congregationalist.

"Slightly Soiled." Two theological students were walking along an "old clothes" street in the Whitechapel district of London. Suddenly one exclaimed, "What a splendid text for a sermon to young men!" pointing to a suit of clothes that hung swaying in the breeze at the side of a window. "Slightly soiled, greatly reduced in price." "That's it, exactly," he went on. "We young people get soiled so slightly, just seeing a vulgar show in a theater, just reading a coarse book, just allowing ourselves a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thoughts, just slightly soiled, and lo! when the time comes for our manhood to be appraised, we are 'greatly reduced in price.' Our charm, our strength is gone."—Sunday School Chronicle.

How Do You Hoe?

Say, how do you hoe your row, young chap?
Say, how do you hoe your row?
Do you hoe it fair,
Do you hoe it square,
Do you hoe it the best you know?
Do you cut the weeds, as you ought to do,
And leave what's worth while there?
The harvest you'll garner depends on you;
Are you working on the square?

Are you killing the noxious weeds, young chap?
Are you making it straight and clean?
Are you going straight,
At a hustling gait,
Are you scattering all that's mean?
Do you laugh and sing and whistle shrill,
And dance a step or two,
As the row you hoe leads up the hill?
The harvest is up to you. —Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. "Reckless living soon makes wrecked lives."

"Our successful men did not feed themselves in boyhood on cigarettes and late suppers, with loafing as their only labor."

Sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.—Cowper.

The best safeguard of a young man is a perfectly open and affectionate relation to his parents.—Le Baron R. Briggs.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Books of Samuel? 2. How did the ark come to be at Kiriath-

jerim? 3. Where is Mizpah? 4. What was the sin of the Israelites? 5. How did they prove their penitence? 6. What were the Ashtaroth? 7. Of what is *Baalim* the plural? 8. Why were the Israelites afraid of the Philistines? 9. How did God answer Samuel's prayer? 10. What did you learn last year about the use of prayer? 11. For whom should you pray? 12. For what may you pray? 13. Does God's answer always come in the way you expect or wish? 14. Why did Samuel set up the stone Ebenezer?

Note-Book Work. Part II of The Life of Samuel: Samuel's Message about Eli and His Sons Fulfilled. Add a characterization of the sons by the father, and an appreciation of the work and the weakness of Eli.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Additional Material: Genesis 18.16-19; Deuteronomy 6.6, 7; 1 Samuel 2.22-36; 3.10-14; 8.1-5; Ephesians 6.1-4.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. This is the second Sunday in May, the annual Sunday whose observance as Mother's Day—or as Parents' Day—is increasingly extending in the churches and Sunday-schools of our land. We have a fitting theme for the day.

Eli's Parental Guilt. Eli seems to have been a kindly, good-natured man. He allowed his sons to do as they pleased, and the result was that they pleased to do ill. Our sympathy goes out to the aged man. He is a lovable character in many respects. Though he had failed in bringing up his own sons aright, he was a kind, true teacher for Samuel. That night's experience in the temple showed him that Samuel was to supplant him and his house, but there is not a trace of jealousy or resentment in his heart. Lovableness, however, cannot atone for weakness, and as a father Eli was culpably weak. He remonstrated mildly with his sons when they were steeped in wickedness, but then it was too late, his words were not freighted with authority, and were ineffectual.

Are Parents always to Blame when their Children Go Wrong? Do we not often see wickedness in the sons and daughters of the best of parents? Not so often as we think, for the best of men and women sometimes fail in their duty as parents and are therefore not the best of parents. Eli is a striking illustration of this fact. But do not the sons of good parents sometimes fail to follow in the parents' footsteps? Yes, sometimes good men and women are good parents, and then they are not to blame for their children's sins. We know that Samuel's mantle did not fall upon his own sons, and there is no indication as in the case of Eli and his sons, that Samuel failed in his duty to them.

The Parents' Duty. There are plenty of fathers who think that the family will be safe if they only govern their child well. "Govern a child in the way he should go" is the way they read the passage, "and when he is old he will not depart from it"; and they do govern him in the way he should go, but he does depart from it. It has been the common experience of families over and over again. I do not say that children should not be governed; but unless the father can do something else than govern the child he is a failure. It is not enough to keep the boy off the street; you must make him wish to stay off the street. It is not enough to keep him in school; you must make him want the school. It is not enough to prevent him from smoking or drinking; you must make him hate self-indulgence and sensuality. You must make the life and the power within work out. You cannot save him by anything that is from without working inward. You cannot in the nation; you cannot in the family.—Dr. Lyman Abbott, in Problems of Life.

The Inheritance. Mr. Jenkins laughed heartily as he watched his five-year-old son stalk up and down in his father's hat and coat, with as close an imitation of his father's gait as he could get.

"How they do love to imitate!" he remarked to Doctor Brown, who was calling.

"Yes," said the clergyman, "it's rather terrifying, isn't it? They are so certain that their fathers are everything that any man should be!"

"I suppose that's one of the greatest influences for good that parents have," replied Mr. Jenkins.

"I was thinking of some good things we don't give them," returned Doctor Brown. "You were raised in a home where religion was so real that it became

naturally a subject of frequent conversation. You heard God's blessing asked on the food at every meal you ate; most of your generation began the day with family prayers. Your conception of manhood was of the religious manhood of your father. That sank deep into the heart of your generation. America today is the product of centuries of such religious homes. We have received a wonderful inheritance, and there are noble ideals and a fairly high attainment of morality in the community because of it.

"There is a great amount of respect for religion in our homes today, but respect for religion is not religion itself. Our children still grow up believing their parents to be the earth's ideal inhabitants, and with some justification, for, on the whole, parents in America are reasonably moral. But so far as the children can judge, those parents get along very comfortably without going to church very much, or without any very positive religious influence to affect their actions. How are they going to know that the goodness of their fathers had its origin in the religion of their grandfathers? The moral standards of today are the fruit of our religious inheritance. But how much of that heritage are we passing on to our children? Are we breeding religion in them as religion was bred in us? History shows that morality will not long endure if there be no religious motive behind it. You remember the man in the parable who was given a 'talent' that he didn't increase, but hid in the ground. Suppose that talent had been one, placed in his care, upon which the welfare and happiness of little children and future generations depended. Suppose, instead of not increasing it, he had thrown it away entirely!"

"I wonder if I have been that man!" said Mr. Jenkins.—Youth's Companion.

Honor Thy Sons and Thy Daughters. But stay, father, did you accustom the boy to virtue, and teach truth to the child at your knee? "Honor thy father and thy mother." Amen. May his days be long who fulfills the command: but implied though unwritten on the table, is there not the order, "Honor thy son and thy daughter"? Pray heaven that we, whose days are already not few in the land, may keep the ordinance, too.—Thackeray.

Dangerous Parents. It is not drunken parents who are most dangerous to the generation that follows; for by their excesses they very often create a reaction in their children. It is careless parents, shifty, and insincere parents with no impressive sense of the reality of God and his government, or of the natural persistence and irremediableness of sin. If we are hasty, if we are wanting in self-control in little temptations, or if, while ostensibly religious, we are insincere; or have no sense of the awfulness of sin and of its certain effects; or if we tamper with the truth or compromise our consciences, while outwardly respectable and regular in life—we are infecting our children with just that evil which in them may break out in violent and ruinous extremes.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. There must be justice and retribution. See The Wages of Sin, The Outlook, March 30, 1912.

2. How far is a parent responsible for the children's sins? See The Problem of the Wayward Child Is That of the Incompetent Parent, Harper's Weekly, December 2, 1911.

3. The father's part in the child's moral and religious education. "The mother puts in the commas and the semicolons into a child's life," says Jean Paul Richter, "but the father puts in the colons and periods." See The Profession of Fatherhood in the Child Welfare Magazine for August, 1913.

4. Training of parents. Connecticut is the first State to formally adopt a Parent Training Department as a definite part of its Adult Division work.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Books of Samuel? 2. What is the meaning of the symbolic act recorded in verse 6? 3. Why did the Israelites gain the victory this time over the same enemy that defeated them under Eli? 4. What does the reference to Samuel in Jer. 15.1 tell you about his reputation? 5. What is said of Samuel in Ps. 99.6? 6. What other instances of Samuel's prayers are recorded? (1 S. 8.6; 12.17, 18, 23; 15.11.) 7. What qualities as a leader had Samuel? 8. When John and James wanted to become leaders under Christ, what did they ask for themselves and in what did Christ teach them that leadership lies? 9. What is your idea of a leader? 10. Is there material for leadership in our class? 11. Are some of us followers who might be leaders?

VICTORY UNDER SAMUEL

Golden Text

Direct your hearts unto Jehovah and serve him only. 1 Samuel 7.3

LESSON 1 Samuel 7.2-17 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 6.19 to 7.1; 8.1-3

1 SAMUEL 7.2 And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. 10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Penitence and Confession
Prayer and Victory
Praise

I. PENITENCE AND PROOF, verses 2-4. It was some twenty years after the ark reached Kiriath-jearim that the Israelites *lamented after Jehovah.* "What the nation had to be taught was a sense of their own sin, as well as wretchedness. A yearning after Jehovah as the chief good had to be awakened in the nation's heart. And this these twenty years of bitter but helpful discipline has accomplished."(Salmond). Samuel exhorted them to prove their penitence by serving Jehovah only. *If you do return unto Jehovah, put away the foreign gods from among you:* destroy the images and altars and groves of the gods worshipped by the native races of Canaan. "Samuel is wisely founding here on

the principle afterwards so plainly announced by that Greater Prophet of whom he was a type—'By their fruits ye shall know them.'" *And direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only.* These words forcibly recall the words of Jesus in Mt. 6.24, "No man can serve two masters." The people obeyed, they *put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth.* These Hebrew plural names stand for the gods and goddesses of the Canaanites, Ashtoreth (singular of Ashtaroth) corresponds to the Babylonian Ishtar and the Greek Astarte.

II. CONFESSION, verses 5, 6. *And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah.* "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven, but neither days, nor hours, nor seasons, did ever come amiss to faithful prayer" (Jeremy Taylor). *And they drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah.* This was done as on the great Day of Atonement: the Targum explains that the pouring out of water was symbolical of the pouring out of their hearts in penitence before the Lord. Compare Lam. 2.19. It had a further meaning that their vows just made would never be broken, for they were "like water spilt upon the ground which can not be gathered up again"; or that "sin was to be cast away as completely as water poured out upon the earth." Then they *fasted,* as the law required on the great Day of Atonement, and said, *We have sinned against Jehovah,* thus making a public confession of their sin. *And Samuel judged the people of Israel in Mizpah.* This gathering of the people was for a somewhat lengthy period, for meanwhile the Philistines had time to arm themselves and advance to the attack.

III. PRAYER AND SACRIFICE, verses 7-9. *When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.* The Philistines evidently thought that the Israelites were assembling preparatory to an attack against them, and they hastened to attack before the Israelites were ready. In the earlier battle with the Philistines, the Israelites had relied upon the ark to save them (last lesson), but now they put their trust in God, saying to Samuel beseechingly, *Cry unto Jehovah our God for us that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering.* "The offering of the whole animal symbolized the self-dedication of the worshipper." *And Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel.* He is afterwards known as one that called upon God, 1 S. 9.6, 7, 8, 9; Ps. 99.6; Jer. 15.1. *And Jehovah answered him.* Verses 10 and 11 record the answer.

IV. VICTORY, verses 10 and 11. *Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day.* Compare Ps. 29.3: "The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth." *The men of Israel pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.* That is, until they came south of Beth-car.

V. GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR THE VICTORY, verse 12. *Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen.* Compare Joshua's "stone of witness," Josh. 24.26, 27. *Mizpah* means *Watch Tower:* see Gen. 31.49. *And called the name of it Ebenezer. Ebenezer* means *Stone of Help. Saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.* That is, up to this point hath Jehovah helped us. Dr. H. P. Smith observes that it was not only up to this point but beyond it that Jehovah had helped them, and because, moreover, there is no declaration concerning the object of setting up the stone, he suggests this reading, "This is a witness that Jehovah has helped us."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us, verse 8. Contrast with this privilege of prayer the beautiful but pathetic custom that prevails among the people of Thibet. When a snowstorm rages the people in the border villages remember those in the interior, the pilgrims and the merchants who are in danger of death from the fury of the tempest. They buy "paper horses" (pieces of paper with a picture of a horse stamped on each) from a lama and, in spite of wind and snow, climb the nearest mountain top and set the "paper horses" free. As the wind carries the "horses" away, the people pray to Buddha, asking him to lay them at the feet of the storm-driven pilgrims, and to turn them into living horses which will bear the pilgrims to their homes in safety.

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, verse 12. The erection of a stone to commemorate any important event has always been customary in the orient. Much of our information of the ancient Chaldeans and Assyrians and Egyptians has been gleaned from the inscriptions on their memorial stones.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In the Book of Judges what is the oft-repeated refrain about apostasy, and repentance and relief? In Deborah's and Barak's victory over the Canaanites, how were they providentially aided? Who were the Philistines? What judge had contended with them and with what result? What defeat had happened at Ebenezer? Upon what had the Israelites depended in this battle? How did the news of the capture of the ark effect Eli? What have you heard about Samuel?

The Fate of the Ark after its Capture by the Philistines. The Philistines bore the ark in triumph to Ashdod, and it remained in the Philistine land several months. It was first put in the temple of their god Dagon at Ashdod. On successive mornings the image of Dagon, we are told, was found prostrate before the ark, and painful boils broke out upon the people. Because of these occurrences, the ark was hurried away first to Gath and then to Ekron. These cities, like Ashdod, were plague-stricken, and the Philistines determined to send back the ark to Israel, for was it not the cause of their calamities? They placed the ark on a cart drawn by kine and let them take it where they would. The kine turned up the valley of Sorek and continued to the borders of the Israelites. The people of Bethshemesh received the ark, but a plague broke out among them, which was ascribed to their having looked into it, and they sent word to the people of Kiriath-jearim to come and get it. There at last it found an abiding place in the house of Abinadab, whose son Eleazer was sanctified to take charge of it.

Samuel, the Great Reformer. The death of Eli and his sons left Israel without a leader. During the twenty years in which the ark was kept in a private house at Kiriath-jearim, it was no longer the rallying point for religious worship, and the people sank into idolatry as gross as that of their heathen neighbors. We are told nothing about Samuel from the time of his boyhood as Eli's assistant till he appeared as the great reformer, but his influence over the people when he assembled them at Mizpah shows that meanwhile he must have been growing in power, and have been sowing the seeds of righteousness which now spring into fruitage. When he pleaded with the people and told them that their misery was the result of their apostasy, with one consent they resolved to put away their idols and serve Jehovah wholly. Samuel had reawakened the spiritual and national life.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

This little map represents the section of Palestine west from the northern end of the Dead Sea and the lower course of the Jordan. It locates the chief places mentioned in the life of Samuel. His home was at Ramah. As judge he visited Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah.

Map Showing the Places Connected with the Life of Samuel

The name *Mizpah* signifies "Watch *Tower,*" and was given to several "lofty places" in Palestine where one can see far across the country. The Mizpah where Samuel assembled the people was a few miles northeast of Bethlehem. It is now called Neby Samwil (Tomb of Samuel); a Crusader's Church, now in ruins, occupies the traditional site of his tomb.

The name *Gilgal* signifies "A Stone Circle," and it, also, was given to several places. The Gilgal where Samuel went in his circuit was not far from Jericho. Ekron was in the northwest part of the Philistine Plain, in the tribe of Dan. Gath was south of Ekron, in the tribe of Judah. See the large colored map. Beth-car is now known as the Well of the Vineyards.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The Israelites knew that Samuel prayed for them. Do your pupils know that you cease not to pray for them? Do you know the burden and the happiness of intercessory prayer? Do you know your pupils individually, their ambitions and temptations, so that you can pray for definite results in their lives? Will you not fulfill this pledge of the "Teachers' League of Prayer": "I promise to unite in prayer every Sunday morning on behalf of the world's Sunday-schools and definitely for my own school and church and class"?

In a book entitled "Secret Power," the Reverend H. C. G. Moule tells the secret of a Sunday-school teacher who was a success. "She was the means under God of bringing scholar after scholar, with always growing frequency, to the feet of Jesus in living conversion, evidenced by a new life of love and consistency. After her death her simple diary was found to contain among other entries the three following statements, with some intervals between: 'Resolved to pray for each scholar by name'; 'Resolved to wrestle in prayer for each scholar by name'; 'Resolved to wrestle for each by name, and to expect an answer.'"

For Bible Class Teachers Dr. J. H. Jowett has a message: "How it is with us and our people? Have we got beneath their burdens and cried out to God? By delicate imagination have we got beneath the pride of this woman and the carelessness of that man, and the sorrow of the disappointed soul yonder? Andrew Bonar, one of the greatest Scotch preachers and one of our greatest saints, used to go every Friday morning into his church, lock the door, and then begin in that empty church to identify himself with each individual member, crying out from the depths of one man's trouble and another man's shame, one woman's vanity and another woman's woe, until the river of life flowed among his people like a brimming, strong river of his native country."

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A GREAT LEADER PRAYING Or, SAMUEL'S PRAYER AND VICTORY

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Two weeks ago we saw the boy Samuel in the tabernacle. Whose Voice did he hear? Whose did he think it was? What did he do? What did Eli say? How often did Samuel hear the call? The third time what did Eli tell him to do? What message was then given him? What was the end of Eli's sons? Of Eli?

The boy Samuel grew to manhood and took Eli's place. He was worthy of it. He was a great man, great as a priest and leader. He was also great in prayer.

A Great Leader Praying. What was the *occasion* of Samuel's prayer? It was inspired by national peril. The people had gathered at Mizpah for a great religious conference, to repent of their sins, to listen to Samuel, to make their offerings to God. Their enemies the Philistines, always on the watch, saw in that meeting a chance for a successful attack. They gathered their armies and marched down thinking, no doubt, that they were going to have an easy task. The news of their approach filled the people with terror. But like brave men they prepared for battle. Remembering that they could hope for no success without God, they entreated Samuel to pray for them, to pray without ceasing. "While we fight, you pray," they said. It is trouble that sends most of us to God in prayer. But prayer is not simply a means of getting out of trouble, or of getting things. It is a means of keeping near to God, of keeping our spirits true. We should always pray.

What was the *character* of Samuel's prayer? Samuel was quite ready to pray. He would have prayed if the people had not asked him to pray. But he was glad to know that they thought of God and depended on him, and he went at once to prepare his offering and make his plea with God. Unfortunately we have no account of what he said at this time. But we know that his prayer was *solitary*—he was alone. We know that it was *intercessory*—he prayed, not for himself only, but for others. We know that it was *definite*—he knew what he wanted and asked for that. We know that it was *religious*—he asked not only that the nation might be delivered but that God's cause and name might be vindicated and become victorious. Are your prayers like that? Are they usually for yourself only? Prayers are never great unless they are unselfish.

What was the *effect* of his prayer? God heard and answered him. The

story says "God thundered," It looks as if there was a terrific thunderstorm which flung the Philistine army into confusion and the Israelites rushed out and completed the work which the storm had begun. It was what we call a "crushing victory." It took all the courage out of the Philistines and for many years afterwards they left the Israelites alone. God gave the victory—yes, but remember it was to a people who had repented and returned to him, and to a people who fought as well as prayed.

It often happens that we cannot take an active part in things as we should like to do. The story shows that we can help for all that. We can pray for the workers, asking God's blessing upon them and their work.

A Sacred Tryst. One night during the Civil War, just before the storming of a strong position, an incident occurred that was possibly of decisive influence upon the fight that followed. The soldiers lay by companies in line of battle, trying to sleep. The men were very restless. Suddenly voices were heard toward the skirmish-line.

"What is that? Who is talking out there in front?" asked the major, anxiously. The whole line was aroused and anxious for a moment.

"Major," answered a man, "it's only some of the boys having a prayer-meeting."

Instantly quiet crept down the line. Thankfulness took the place of anxiety, and somewhat with a feeling of confidence and security the soldiers adjusted themselves anew to sleep.—Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: James 5.16 b, or Ps. 118.6.

Scarcely have I asked in prayer
That which others might not share.—Whittier.

He that prayeth for another is heard for himself.—Jewish Saying.

Pray therefore when thy heart is light,
And he has made thee glad;
Pray in the dark and stormy night,
When life has made thee sad.—Marianne Farmingham.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. For what was Saul looking when he met the prophet Samuel? (1 S. 9.1-14.) 2. Was Saul surprised when he heard that he was to be king? 3. What did he say? 4. What did he mean? 5. What do you think Saul and Samuel talked about on the housetop? 6. When Saul reached home what did he say about the kingship? (1 S. 10.14-16.) 7. How was Saul chosen at Mizpah? (1 S. 10.17-21.) 8. Where did the people find Saul and why was he there? (1 S. 10.22.)

Note-Book Work. VI. The Lesson Title; two statements as to the occasion of Samuel's prayer; three statements about the prayer; how the prayer was answered; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: VICTORY THROUGH PRAYER

Additional Material: Luke 22.39-46.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. After the Battle of Waterloo a dispatch was sent to England by the semaphore-telegraph. "Wellington defeated," were the words received, and then a dense fog came up. For three long days London lamented, but with the reappearing sun came the rest of the message—"the French at Waterloo!"

Last week we heard how the Israelites were defeated near Ebenezer. Their loss in men was very heavy: and their sacred ark was taken. Twenty years have passed. Today the news is revoked. It is the Philistines at Ebenezer whom the Israelites defeat. Why were the Israelites defeated in the former battle? Why are they victorious now?

Victory through Prayer. In Mr. Pearson's biography of John Albion Andrew, Massachusetts "War Governor," we are told about his abiding faith in prayer. In the summer before the Emancipation Proclamation, he plead with a friend to go to Washington and urge upon Lincoln the advisability of making it at once. The friend demurred, but finally consented to go. No sooner had the friend given his promise to go, than Andrew turned suddenly upon him and said, "You believe in prayer, don't you?" "Why, of course!" was the sur-

prised response. "Then let us pray," said the Governor. "And he knelt right down"—to quote the friend's words—"at the chair that was placed there. We both kneeled down, and I never heard such a prayer in all my life. I never was so near the throne of God, except when my mother died, as I was then."

Mr. Kingsley, the friend, told Lincoln about Governor Andrew's prayer, and the latter said: "When we have the Governor of Massachusetts to send us troops in the way he has, and when he have him to make such prayers for us, I have no doubt that we shall succeed."

General Pershing believes that prayer helped win the victory in the Great War. Our soldiers believe it, too. "The invisible, unconquerable force let loose by the prayers, hopes, and ideals of Christian America, of which you are the representative, is incalculable," said General Pershing in response to a message sent him by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Great Britain believes that prayer helped to win the victory. Admiral Beatty's signal after the surrender of the German ships is now famous, in which he stated his intention of returning "thanks to Almighty God for the glorious victory." The first action in Great Britain after the news of the Armistice came, was to call the legislators together for thanksgiving and praise to God. Verily there is a God who judgeth the earth and giveth victory to the righteous cause. This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Thanksgiving for Our Victory in the War. "We thank thee, Lord, that thou hast wrought a great deliverance for us. We praise thy name for victory, even as we turned to thee for help in time of trouble. Thou hast prepared a way before us; and in thy strength we have been made sufficient for the pulling down of strongholds. We bless thee for leaders who have shown the road, for men and women who have not refused their lives for the common need."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Prayer for others is sincere when it is followed up by service for others.

God's design is to give the chances of victory, and then by every victory gained to put another sword of victory in your hands.—Horace Bushnell.

Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who are the heroes of the Books of Samuel? 2. What kind of life had Saul led before he met Samuel? 3. Where was he going when he met the prophet? 4. Why did Saul think of returning before finding the lost asses? (1 S. 9.3-5.) 5. What counsel did his servant give? (1 S. 9.6-10.) 6. What did Saul's words to Samuel, verse 21, show? 7. For what purposes was the housetop used? 8. What was the meaning of the anointing? 9. What report of his interview with Samuel did Saul give at home? (1 S. 10.14-16.) 10. Why did he say nothing about the honor that came to him? 11. How is Saul described in 1 S. 9.2? 12. What kind of young man do you think Saul was? 13. How did he show his courage? 14. What was the secret of his victory over the Ammonites? (1 S. 11.13.)

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Samuel write Part III. Samuel the Victorious Leader and Deliverer.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

Additional Material: Exodus 18.13-26; Joshua 1.5-9; Acts 6.1-7.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There are times in the life of many nations when everything hangs on one personality. A new enterprise has to be faced, and the one tremendous necessity is a leader, who will not only lead, but will uphold the spirit of his followers. He is the keystone of the arch, the foundation-stone of the building, the anchor of the ship." Such a personality was Samuel.

Samuel's Leadership. Samuel is remembered in Israelitish history as prophet, reformer, judge, and leader; a man second only to Moses among their great men. The Book of First Samuel gives a full account of his birth and childhood, and then, save for the seventh chapter which forms our lesson today, records only his old age when he is a participator in the events connected with the lives of Saul and David. We wish that we knew more about his active years, but we need only to compare the condition of the Israelites in Eli's days and

their condition when, strong in their belief in the Lord, they overthrew the Philistine yoke, to realize how great a man he was and how well he deserved his great reputation. Perhaps if we knew more about his history we should go further and declare him to be the second founder of the true religion among the Israelites.

Helper or Leader? "It is honorable to be a hand or a helper if that is what God made you to be. But it is wrong not to be a mind or a leader of men if God has put the possibility of such within you."

Training for Leadership. Leadership is not what many misguided men imagine—bossiness. Men who try to lead by putting on lordly airs and ordering people around constitute a spectacle which varies on different occasions from being funny to being pathetic. If, then, airs and bossism fail to work, where shall leadership be found? Pretty clearly, not in any direction of self-assumed importance, nor through any rash rush for spectacular command over men, nor yet by means of pious pretensions. Leadership is not something to be secured on a hurry-up order, telegraphed to some ready-made factory. It is a fabric to be spun and woven day after day on a tedious handloom at home.

Men who really do lead their neighbors are men who have lived among their fellows simple lives of brotherhood long enough to convince everybody that they are very certainly not "out for anything for themselves." Unselfishness, in fact, is the first condition of leadership that lasts long enough to arrive anywhere. For it is dead sure that men won't follow anybody who is known to be chiefly hunting benefits to himself. Even the suspicion of a selfish interest is quite enough to break the spell of loyalty which is a leader's whole capital. Anybody therefore who craves to be a leader must be content to serve an apprenticeship of brotherly helpfulness and sympathy and cheerful burden-bearing till his record testifies beyond all confutation that he has no ambition to climb above his neighbors but only an ambition to rise with them.

Men who lead must be ready, when required, to dare anything. Nobody is a leader who sets a limit to the perils he is willing to incur or the hardships he can afford to undergo. Boundaries of "too much" for one's endeavor or one's courage mean defeat for one's self and rout for whoever tries to follow. So another condition of leadership is a determination that balks at no sacrifice. Only a spirit that stands this test has grip and grit enough to call other men into enterprises of hazard. And enterprises without hazard are not worth leadership.

But where does all this come out? The analysis of leadership brings to view elements of what? Just service, isn't it? Jesus said: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whoever would be first among you shall be your servant." Those who are leading found the power to lead by putting themselves unselfishly, humbly, unreservedly at the service of men.—Condensed from Applied Religion for Every Man, by Nolan R. Best.

An Indispensable Qualification for Leadership. Personal character of a noble and exalted type is the first, and by far the most important, qualification for leadership. A democracy which does not insist on this, which takes into equal or greater account gifts of eloquence, or intellect, or administrative ability, or diplomatic skill, and which, swept along by them, commits the reins of its Government to impure hands, enters upon dangerous paths. A democratic government becomes decadent when it ceases to be a moral movement, and moral ends cannot be achieved by immoral agencies, however attractive in other respects.—Archdeacon Carnegie.

Two of General Joffre's Qualifications for Leadership. Two incidents in General Joffre's career might be commended to the thoughtful study of Americans in high position. He won the Battle of the Marne only because in the first days of the war he relieved some twenty generals—most of them his personal friends—of their commands. He did not permit personal friendship or political influence to weigh in the balance against incompetence. And he himself, when it came time to relinquish the supreme command in the field, gave way cheerfully to a younger man, and was content to serve his country in a post of less authority than that which he had held.—Youth's Companion.

A Born Leader. He was a crippled newsboy, who had received little schooling on week-days and less on Sundays. But he had managed to grapple with one

or two living truths. He made them his own, and held them like a rod over his fellows.

He was an obstinate, vehement, energetic boy; a born leader. His clothes were ragged, his feet bare; he could not speak a grammatical sentence, but he ruled his companions like a Napoleon. He formed them into a club, sixty in number, of which he elected himself perpetual head. Its object was "to make honest, decent men" of its members.

He made rules to which his strong will-power forced them to conform. They were neither to drink nor to gamble. Part of their weekly earnings they must put into a savings bank. When he proposed that they should form a beneficiary society for mutual help in sickness, and invited a city missionary to lecture regularly to them, his companions dubbed him in jest the "bishop."

The name seemed apt and clung to him. He died in his fiftieth year, having accomplished more actual good in the world than many men of threescore and ten.—Youth's Companion.

Potential Leaders. A youth, for instance, of sound inheritances and wholesome tastes, comes to his manhood with a fund of health, friends, education, and money, and enters the life of the modern world. What potential leadership and serviceableness are put into his hands! What a chance is his to guide, to serve, to lift, to redeem!

Now watch this youth as the world's work and play lay hold on him and he becomes immersed in the routine and frivolity of life. Money and sport, getting and spending, office and clubs, overwhelm his idealism and sweep him into the current of commonplace, until he sinks into the monotonous ocean of mediocrity. Nothing that is base or discreditable need be reported of this submergence of a soul. The man may emerge at last a respectable, comfortable, portly citizen, to be described in the commercial phrase of our obituaries as "successful." But what a waste has there been of the finest stuff; what precious by-products have remained unutilized; what undiscovered strength of character and unsuspected resources of nobility and wisdom, have been drowned by the rising tide of prosperity or indolence!—Professor Francis G. Peabody, in Sunday Evenings in the College Chapel.

To the Fore.

Move to the fore,
Men whom God hath named fit for fray;
Not yours to shrink as the feeble ones may;
Not yours to parley and quibble and shirk,
Ill for the world if ye do not God's work,
Move to the fore!

Move to the fore,
Say not another is fitter than thou,
Shame to the manhood that sits on thy brow!
Own thyself equal to all that men may,
Cease thine evading; God needs thee today!
Move to the fore. —James Buckham.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. In this world there are few voices, but many echoes.—Tennyson.

2. Faith in God is indispensable to successful statesmanship.—Lincoln.

3. What is our church doing to train leaders? What else can it do along this line?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What events are told twice in the Books of Samuel, and what does this indicate 2. Why did the people demand a king? (1 S. 8.1-5.) 3. How did Samuel protest against this? (1 S. 8.10-18.) 4. Read the vivid account of the powers of an absolute monarch in 1 S. 8.11-17. 5. What effect did Samuel's protest have upon the people? 6. Why was it wise to have the king chosen from a small tribe? 7. What does the word *seer,* verse 18, mean? 8. Does Saul's attitude at Samuel's announcement that he was to be king (verse 21) and when he was chosen king (1 S. 10.22) indicate modesty, or was it a shrinking from responsibility? 9. What impression of Saul do you gain from chapters 9 and 10?

ISRAEL'S FIRST KING

Golden Text

Only fear Jehovah, and serve him in truth with all your heart. 1 Samuel 12.24

LESSON 1 Samuel 9.15-10.24 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 19

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 8.4 to 9.14; 10.25-27

1 SAMUEL 9.15 Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying, 16 To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. 17 And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people. 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. 19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. 20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? 21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. 26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27 As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still first, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God.

10.1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Choice
The Anointing of a KING
Coronation

I. GOD'S WILL REGARDING A KING REVEALED TO SAMUEL, 9.15-17. The verb *revealed* in the Hebrew, as the margin of our Bible explains, means literally *uncovered the ear of* and signified the divine Spirit's announcement to the human spirit. "The revelation which Samuel received the day before Saul's arrival, that a man of Benjamin would come to him, whom he was to appoint prince over Israel, was psychologically based on his constant prayerful, expectant reflection as to how God would establish the monarchy

Jean Joseph Benjamin Constant

SAMUEL ANOINTING SAUL

Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance? 1 Samuel 10.1.

Samuel goes wrong

Get pump for me

G. will revealed

o follow,

R. C.

promised to the people." *When Samuel saw Saul* he asked himself whether this was the Benjamite of whom he had been told, and he received the assurance that he was the man chosen by God to be the leader of the people.

II. SAUL BECOMES SAMUEL'S GUEST, 9.18-27. *Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate.* Read 1 S. 9.1-14. The gate was the gateway of the city. Saul then asked Samuel for the *seer's house.* In the last chapter we are told that "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." Samuel was partly seer, partly prophet. "The seer was consulted in all domestic details, and he gave his oracle by consulting various methods of divination. But the prophet was in a different sense the man of God. He waited for his message from God to come to him directly without any mediation of material things; the subjects he dealt with were, too, of wider bearing—the relation of the nation to God, the future of the nation, the religious purpose of Israel. Samuel marks the transition. As seer his aid is invited in the discovery of lost property; as prophet, in the setting apart of a king for the chosen people"(R. Bruce Taylor).

I am the seer; go up before me into the high place. Note the courtesy that Samuel shows throughout the story to the man who is to take Samuel's place at the head of the nation. No man ever stepped down more graciously for his successor. *The high place* was the place higher than the city where sacrifices were offered; see verse 12. In verse 20 Samuel shows himself a seer and a prophet; he bids Saul *set not his mind upon the lost asses,* not to be anxious about them, *for they are found.* And he awakens great expectations in Saul's heart: *For whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for thy father's house?*

In astonishment Saul answered: *Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel?* The tribe of Manasseh was originally the smallest (Num. 1.37), but the slaughter recorded in Judges 20.46 had made Benjamin smaller still. It was well to have the king chosen from a small tribe, for had he belonged to the large tribe of Ephraim, Judah would have been jealous, or of Judah, Ephraim had rebelled. *And my family the least of all the families of Benjamin?* This extravagant expression of humility is in accordance with Eastern custom, but, as Dr. Alexander Whyte says, it seems to be "the language of a man whose heart is really touched for the time with divine grace. It is real humility." *Wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?* Recall Henry Martyn's words when he received his appointment as chaplain to the troops in India—the first step on the road to his life as a missionary: "What am I, or what is my father's house, that I should be made willing, and what am I that I should be so happy and honored?"

Samuel escorted Saul and his servant to *the guest chamber,* evidently the room used especially for sacrificial feasts, and gave them *the chiefest place among them that were bidden.* The fact that Saul's servant as well as Saul himself was given the place of honor shows how simple were the customs of the time. As a special honor Samuel bade the cook bring to Saul the portion that *had been reserved:* Driver thinks the fat tail of certain breeds of sheep was meant; another translation is *the leg,* for the right leg was the priest's portion (Lev. 7.32) and would have been reserved for Samuel.

And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. The conversation which Samuel there had with Saul may have referred, as has been said, "not to the royal dignity, but surely to the deep religious and political decline of the people of God, the opposition of the heathen, the causes of the impotency to oppose these enemies, the necessity of a religious change in these people, and of a leader thoroughly obedient to the Lord." *And about the spring of the day* (compare our old English word *dayspring*) *Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away.* Dawn was the time for departure in that hot country.

III. SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL TO BE KING, AND GIVES HIM DIRECTIONS, 10.1-8. *Samuel poured the oil upon Saul's head and kissed him.* Before this the priests had been anointed, and "when therefore Saul was consecrated as King by anointing, the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution standing on a par with the priesthood." Kirkpatrick reminds us that

the ceremonies of this first recorded coronation are still observed in England. The anointing is performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the kiss of homage is given by the Archbishop, bishops, and premier peer of each rank for the rest of his order. *Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?* questioned Samuel. Thus Samuel impressed Saul with the fact that it was God who had chosen him to rule, and to God, therefore, he was responsible for the way he ruled.

Egyptian Representation of Anointing

IV. SAUL AMONG THE PROPHETS, 10.9-13.
V. SAUL AT HOME, 10.14-16.
VI. SAUL CHOSEN BY LOT AT MIZPAH, 10. 17-24.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

In the gate, verse 18. This means the gateway through the fortifications into the city. Such a gateway was flanked with towers and had a chamber above it. The gate of an Eastern city has always been the public meeting place for the people. Among the Israelites justice was administered at the gate and the hearing of suits was public. In the times that succeeded the choice of Saul the kings transacted business either in the shade of the city gate, or of the gate of the palace (2 S. 19.8).

Upon the housetop, verse 25. The flat roofs of the houses in Palestine are still used for sleeping in the hot months, and are resorted to by those who would have a quiet talk away from the rest of the household or the neighbors.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In the earliest history of the Hebrews, who were the leaders? Who were the leaders during the Wilderness Wandering? Who led the people into Canaan? What were the leaders called who ruled after Joshua? What sort of young men were Eli's sons? How was Eli culpable concerning them? What message did Samuel have to give Eli because of this?

Israel Becomes a Monarchy. For a long time Samuel, the greatest of all the judges, ruled in peace. Then the Philistines again troubled the Israelites. "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre and took bribes, and perverted justice." It is not said that Samuel had been culpable in the training of his sons, as was Eli with his sons, but the effect of their sins upon the Israelites was most disastrous. They needed a strong man at their head to unite them as a nation and save them from the combined opposition of the Philistines. Then, too, they had long envied their neighbors who gloried in their kings; the Israelites would be like them and have their own king. Therefore the elders came to Samuel at Ramah and asked him to give them a king. Samuel was not pleased at their request; he preferred a more direct dependence of the nation upon Jehovah. He made a solemn protest, telling them what they would suffer under a king, but the people persisted.

Samuel was a true statesman, he saw that the time had come when Israel must have a king, and he yielded. Thus began the United Kingdom of Israel. Hitherto the freedom from enemies had been gained through spasmodic efforts, led by champions who had appeared when needed, but upon their death the tribes had lapsed again into disunion and confusion and anarchy. Even in the days of Israel's theocracy, have we seen how necessary was a human leader. In this crisis in Israel's history, when the people were no longer content to be a theocracy, the monarchy was established under Samuel's wise leadership. Under divine guidance, he selected Saul to be the first king of Israel. Samuel, the last of the judges and the greatest, was the founder both of the monarchy and also of the prophetic order. By him schools of the prophets were established. Instead of a priest only, and a judge in times of special stress only, from henceforth Israel had a king, and as long as the monarchy lasted, a prophet, to confront the king and check the royal power.

The Account in First Samuel of the Choice of Saul as King. It is be-

lieved by the majority of scholars that we have in the First Book of Samuel two different accounts of the election of Saul as king, and that the account in which Samuel's hostility to the movement appears is the representation of a later writer who had seen the abuses of kingly power. Yet it is quite possible to reconcile the two accounts. The fact that Saul is formally chosen by lot in the tenth chapter, is no disproof of his having been already selected by Samuel as told in our lesson, for the casting of lots may have been merely a matter of form. But see ¶ 2, p. 29 of our Introduction.

After the Anointing. After anointing Saul, the prophet gave him several "signs" that should prove to him the divine approval, all of which came to pass that day—by Rachel's tomb two men met him and told him the asses were found and his father was anxious about him; by the oak of Tabor three men on their way to sacrifice at Bethel shared their food with him; farther on a band of prophets met him and he prophesied among them, greatly to the surprise of all who knew him.

Definite dates cannot be assigned to Saul's reign. His accession may have been about 1030 B. C.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The name *Gibeah* means Hill, and it was given to various places. "Gibeah of Saul," Saul's home, was in the tribe of Benjamin not far from Ramah, where he met Samuel. For Ramah see the last lesson.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was a difficult situation which Samuel faced, and the way he handled it embodies a lesson for us. The time comes in many a class when its members are no longer satisfied with existing conditions. They demand a change. The teacher's first natural impulse is to utter a *non possumus*, but that is seldom wise. Concessions should usually be made. Had Samuel refused to give the people a king they probably would have chosen one for themselves and Samuel would have lost his chance of controlling the national destinies.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: SAUL CHOSEN KING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "The asses had run away. They had got out into the road, and nobody knew where they had gone. So Saul's father said, 'Saul, the asses are lost. Take one of the men with you and go and find them.' And they went in search, Saul and the hired man. And here they looked, and there they looked, down this way and down that, in the woods and in the fields, but they were nowhere to be found. They hunted for them for three days, in vain."(Dean Hodges).

Tell the rest of the story in dialogue form as much as possible: the conversation between Saul and the hired man about the seer and what he could do, and the present they should take him; next the conversation between Saul and the maidens coming down to the well with earthenware jars on their heads; the meeting with Samuel and the conversation held on the way to the house; then the conversation at the feast between Samuel and his cook, between Samuel and Saul at the table, and then between Samuel and Saul upon the housetop. Give the conversation between Samuel and Saul the next morning, describe the anointing and the departure of Saul.

Give a vivid account of what happened to Saul after he reached home, his words to his Uncle Abner, his silence about what Samuel had said and done. Describe the meeting of the people which Samuel called, the passing of the tribes, one by one before him, and the choice of the tribe of Benjamin; then the passing of each family, one after the other, and the choice of the family of Kish, and then the passing of the men in the family, and one found wanting. Where was Saul? He was so modest, knowing that he was the one who had been chosen king, that he was in hiding. They found him, and made him stand before all the people. Describe him, tall and good to look upon, and how the people shouted, "God save the King!"

Tell why the people had wanted a king. After it was over Saul went back to his ploughing as if nothing had happened. Call for the Golden Text. Samuel

feared God and taught the king and the people to fear him. Explain what it means to fear God.

Some men are born to crowns and thrones. Like King George of England, they become kings because their fathers were kings or mothers were queens before them. Some men win thrones by conquest—like Napoleon, who started life as an artillery officer and fought his way to the throne of France. Some men are called to be kings. The people want a leader and ruler and call the man they think best fitted for the position—as we call our ruler, or president. The last is what happened to Saul. He was called to rule Israel by the Voice of God and the will of the people. And this surely is the best way of getting the crown.

Saul Chosen King. How and Why did Saul's *call* come? He had heard the people talking about wanting a king. But he had never had any thought or wish about being king himself. When he started after those lost asses he was not saying to himself, "I wish I were going to be king, going to get rid of all these small, tiresome tasks and have a bigger, more worth-while task." If anyone had told him that his search would end in a crown, he would have laughed at them. Yet he met the prophet Samuel, and Samuel told him that God meant him to be king. It was the greatest surprise of his life.

But remember that call had a background. It was not luck, nor an accident; nor was it the fancy of a prophet for a fine-looking man. It came because of what Saul was and had been in his father's house. God saw that he had in him the making of a king, and God directed Samuel to call and anoint him. Unlike Saul, some of us dream of great tasks. Well, if we want them we must show ourselves fit for them.

What *encouragements* did Saul have? The news was startling and disturbing. Saul was troubled with doubts. Was it true? Would the people have him? Was he the right man for the task? Any good man would have felt the same under the circumstances. Samuel saw what was on his mind and at once sought to encourage and assure him. He told him that on his way home certain things would happen to him, and he would know by those things that what he had been told was true. And these things did happen to him, and Saul was convinced that he was not dreaming, but that he was really called to be king.

Every man who has a call wants that conviction. He cannot "carry on" unless in his heart he believes that he is the right man for the task. And if he is the right man he will get it. Circumstances, friends, happenings, past successes, and sometimes little things give their assurance.

How was Saul *equipped* for his task? Saul had many qualifications for his post. He had a fine physique, a commanding presence. He had a spirit, courage, gifts of leadership. But he lacked one thing. So far he had not shown any great love for God. He had not seemed to be very devout. And what he lacked was given to him on that day of wonderful experiences. His heart was changed, and for a little while he became an inspired man and took his place among the prophets.

That was the encouragement which we all want—that if God calls us he will equip us for our task. What we need will be granted us. No nation asks a general to go and fight a battle without soldiers or guns or swords. The nation equips an army for him, provides him with all he wants for his task. And God will do the same for those whom he calls to fight his great battles.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Luke 16.10 Or 1 Samuel 2.30.

May God give you much, lad!
A sense of honor fine.
True modesty and bravery,
And thought for "now and when,"

Which made the ancient chivalry
In days of Auld Lang Syne,
And, unto these, be added
The leadership of men!—Elinor Macartney Lane.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In writing the history, what purpose guided the writers of the Books of Samuel? 2. How is Jonathan described in 2 S. 1.23? 3. What words show his faith in God? 4. What is the meaning of the last sentence of verse 6? 5. How

many men did Gideon have when he won his famous victory? 6. What sort of men were they? 7. What sort of men were Jonathan and his armorbearer? 8. What sort of men were the Philistines in the garrison on the hill? 9. How could the two men surprise the camp? 10. Do you suppose the Philistines knew there were only two men in the attacking party? 11. What was the result of Jonathan's feat?

Note-Book Work. VII. The Lesson Title; why a king was chosen; three statements about the first meeting of Samuel and Saul; a statement about the anointing; an account of Saul's presentation to the people; the Golden Text.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: KINGLY QUALITIES IN SAUL, Or, MEETING AN OPPORTUNITY

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. See the Historical Background.

Kingly Qualities in Saul. Saul was physically fit for leadership. He was kingly in appearance, towering head and shoulders above those around him, and "goodly to look upon." He had personal qualities of a high order. He had proved himself a dutiful son, faithful in carrying out his father's orders, and only he who has learned how to obey is fit to give orders to others. He had seen visions and dreamed dreams—if we may deduce this from Samuel's reference to all that was in his heart: he had meditated long upon his country's affliction, had believed in Israel's great destiny, and had longed to do what he could to further that destiny.

When suddenly the opportunity came, and he learned that God had chosen him to be the leader of his people, he showed a modest estimate of himself in his words to Samuel. He was not a braggart, for after being anointed by Samuel he returned home and told about the finding of the lost animals but said not a word about the great honor that had come to himself. When the time came to make him king he hid among the baggage, so unassuming, self-distrustful was he. He showed great self-control when at his coronation some "worthless fellows" brought him no present as was expected, thereby indicating that they "despised him." Instead of resenting such treatment he left the future and his own deeds to justify him.

His first deed as king proved his courage and established his renown as a warrior, when he promptly led an attack against the enemy and won the victory. The people in their gratitude would have put to death the men that had opposed them, but Saul showed a magnanimous spirit and ascribed to God the victory: "There shall not a man be put to death this day," he declared, "for today Jehovah hath wrought a deliverance in Israel."

Saul was a young man of promise, a king of great possibilities. As we follow his history, however, we shall see that the fair promise of a just reign lived in the fear of God was not fulfilled.

Meeting an Opportunity. The first feeling of many young people when an opportunity for service is presented to them is aptly expressed in these words of Browning:

> I was not born
> Informed and fearless from the first, but shrank
> From ought which marked me out apart from men:
> I would have lived their life, and died their death,
> Lost in their ranks, eluding destiny.

A wholly natural feeling that, but one which must be speedily overcome. Our word *responsibility* is derived from the Latin word *respondere,* which means to respond, to answer, the latter composed of the prefix *re,* meaning back, and *spondere,* meaning promise. A responsibility calls for a response, a promising back that we will fulfil the obligation. Not to respond to the responsibility that belongs to us is cowardly and unchristian.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

> If you were born to honor show it now
> If put upon you, make the judgment good
> That thought you worthy of it.—Shakespeare.

> "Nor titles honor give to men,
> But men their titles crown."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why were the Books of Samuel written? 2. What is said about Saul in the 13th chapter? 3. How is Jonathan described in 2 S. 1.23? 4. Why did not Jonathan tell his father what he intended to do? 5. Why was he justified in his course? 6. What words show that he was not relying upon his own strength? 7. Describe the battle of Michmash. 8. Tell the story of Jonathan's innocent disobedience to his father's command and the result. (1 S. 12.24-46.) 9. What fine qualities does Jonathan show in this chapter?

Note-Book Work. Begin a Life of Saul. Today write Part I. Saul Chosen King. Add a characterization of Saul by Samuel.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE SELECTION OF LEADERS

Additional Material: Luke 6.12-16; Acts 9.13-19.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. To a few men like Gladstone, "The Grand Old Man," it is given to labor almost till the last moment of a long life with strength of mind and of body unabated, but to almost every man who lives long a pathetic moment comes when he is made to realize that his best work is over, that a younger and abler man is wanted to fill the place he has held so long. That moment has come to Samuel. It is a very bitter potion he must drink, but in this crisis of personal and national affairs he shows the true nobility of his character.

Common Sense Bows to the Inevitable and Makes Use of it. This is a wise saying of Wendell Phillips. Samuel exemplified it in that long ago. He gave the elders a vivid picture of the tyranny of an oriental despot. "Nay, but we will have a king over us," was the only response.

A weaker, less noble, man would have said: "Very well, if you are determined to take things into your own hands and have your own way despite my warnings, I shall leave you to your own resources. Do what you will. As for myself, I shall retire to Ramah." And then he might have watched the people try to establish a new kind of government, all the time secretly rejoicing over their failures and troubles, or even openly reminding them, "I told you so."

Very different was Samuel's conduct. When he became convinced that the people were not to be dissuaded, and that it was God's will that they should have a king, he submitted whole-heartedly to the inevitable. He chose the king; and did not regard him as a rival but treated him generously. When first he saw him he invited him to a feast, bade him go before him as of greater importance than himself, give him the position of honor at table and had the choice portion placed before him. When he presented him to the people he said enthusiastically, "See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people."

Was Israel Wrong in Asking for a King? The two outstanding facts at this time were that the siege of Jabesh-gilead by Nahash, king of the Ammonites, and the cruel terms he gave the inhabitants (1 S. 11.1; 12.2) made it necessary for the Israelites to have a strong leader to fight their battles, and that Samuel was old and his sons were worthless fellows. The clamor for a king followed.

"Nay; but we will have a king over us," said the people to Samuel. The great wrong lay not so much in their wanting a king as in the way in which they demanded one. It was the sin of self-will, their will they were determined to have in opposition to that of Samuel their prophet and judge who interpreted to them the will of Jehovah. We are reminded of their descendants who demanded the death of Christ, and in their determination to have their own will said to Pilate, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Whatever the consequences, they were determined to have their own way and be ruled by a king. The warfare of every Christian life is that between his own self-will and the will of God.

The Leader whom God Chooses. God chooses the leader to fit the people. Saul in Israel, Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, Nero in Rome, William the Silent in Holland, Philip II in Spain, (William Hohenzollern in Germany, we may add), Washington and Lincoln in America—all the powers that be, or have been, were ordained of God. And yet in every case the forces that have created them, and the causes that have exalted them, are to be sought in the char-

acter of the nations over which they have ruled. God ordains the power, but he ordains it to fit the people. A bandit-chief for a tribe of brigands, a tyrant for slaves, an inquisitor for bigots, a liberator for a race of freemen. The ruler is but the exponent of the inmost thoughts, desires, and ambitions of the ruled; sometimes their punishment, and sometimes their reward.—Dr. Henry van Dyke, in Essays in Application.

The Choosing of a Leader for Germany. It took the bloody four years' war to convince the people of Germany that a tyrant who could precipitate and wage the most inhuman war of history in order to gratify his ambition was not the right kind of leader. A democracy was declared and a president selected. At this writing it is too early to say whether or not the right leader was selected. Saul started out well, but he ended ingloriously, and another king, "a man after God's own heart," succeeded him. This may be Germany's experience. But the hand of God is clearly seen in the overthrow of the old régime of autocratic emperors and the instituting of a government where the people rule. We believe that "God is able to make truth and right reason prevail" even in Germany, and that there is hope for her future under well-chosen leaders.

God's Ruling Hand in the Choice of Leaders of a Democracy. All that may be said of the propriety of appealing to Providence and trusting God for the ordaining of the powers that be, applies to the democratic method even more than to any other. Why should we suppose that Providence has anything more to do with the ambition of a strong man to climb a throne, than with the desire of a great people to make a strong man their leader?

The characteristic of democracy, says James Russell Lowell, is its habit of "asking the Powers that Be, at the most inconvenient moment, whether they are the Powers that Ought to Be." And what is the question but an appeal to the divine judgment and law?

There is as much room for Providence to act in the growth of public opinion as in the rise and propagation of a royal house. What royal house is there that goes so far as to vindicate the ways of God to man as the succession of Presidents chosen by the people of the American Republic? Some of the choices have not been brilliant, a few have been unfortunate, none has been evil or corrupt. There is no line of hereditary kings, no line of autocratic emperors, that claims as many great men, or half as many good men, in an equal period of time, as the line of Presidents of the United States.

There is warrant, then, in reason and in experience, for believing in the divine right of democracy. It is not the only righteous and lawful method of selecting rulers, but it is the highest and most reasonable. We lift our patriotism above the shallow and flashy enthusiasm for institutions merely because they are ours. We confide ourselves to the hopeful and progressive view of human nature, to the faith that God is able to make truth and right reason prevail in the area of public opinion.—Condensed from Essays in Application, by Dr. Henry van Dyke.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Elements of prophecy, 1 S. 9.18, 19. See chapter X of According to my Gospel, by Hugh Black.

2. There is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. —Paul.

3. In every movement there is a discontented minority. 1 S. 10.27.

4. Samuel's disappointment. How often does it happen that a man who is engaged in the noblest work needs to be reminded that the cause for which he is laboring is holier than himself.—Dr. Van Dyke.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the purpose of the Books of Samuel? 2. What do we know about the Philistine peril at this time and the equipment of the Israelites? (1 S. 13.1-7.) 3. Was Jonathan justified in keeping his purpose from his father? 4. Which verses of our lesson are parenthetical, interrupting the narrative? 5. What was the ephod? 6. What is the meaning of the last expression of verse 6? Explain how the answer of the Philistines would help Jonathan to decide what to do. 7. What did the Philistines mean by their words of verse 12? 8. How can you explain the failure of the garrison to resist the two men? 9. Was Jonathan's an act of presumption or of faith? 10. What qualities of a leader does Jonathan exhibit in this event?

JONATHAN DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

Golden Text

Be strong and of good courage. Joshua 1.6

LESSON 1 Samuel 14.1-46 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 27.1-6

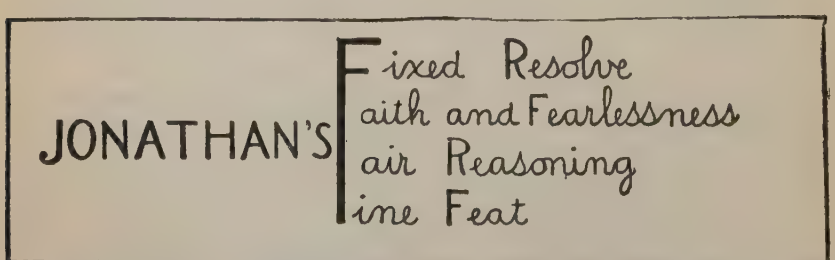
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 13.1-23

1 SAMUEL 14.1 Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side. But he told not his father. 2 And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate-tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; 3 And Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. 4 And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. 7 And his armorbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee, behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. 8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and we will disclose ourselves unto them. 9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. 10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up; for Jehovah hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. 11 And both of them disclosed themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. 12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me; for Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. 13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armorbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew them after him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. JONATHAN'S RESOLVE AND THE SITUATION IN ISRAEL, verses 1-3. *Now it fell upon a day,* thus the narrative of Jonathan's exploit begins, *that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor,* his trusted attendant, such as Gideon had, Judges 9.54; 7.10: *Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side.* This was

the advance post of the Philistines at Michmash, mentioned in 13.23. *But he told not his father.* He knew his father would think the undertaking impossible and would have forbidden it as too dangerous, whereas he felt justified in making the attempt because of the gravity of the peril into which his country had fallen, and which he had brought to a crisis by his attack upon Geba (1 S. 13.3), and also because he was relying upon God's help, verse 6.

And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah. Saul being in the outskirts of Gibeah, at its extreme northern end, made it possible for Jonathan to carry out his project without Saul's knowledge. *Under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron.* Various suggestions have been given as to the meaning of *Migron* —threshing-floor, precipice, cliff. According to Judges 20.45, a rock near Gibeah bore the name "Rock of the Pomegranate." "It is a natural supposition that the same place is meant here, named after the well-known pomegranate." Saul's following consisted of *about six hundred men,* among them *Ahijah,* the great-grandson of Eli, who wore *an ephod,* the sign of his high-priestly office.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND THAT JONATHAN HAD TO TRAVERSE, verses 4, 5. *Between the passes* there lay *rocky crags* opposite each other. Doubtless there were side-wadies which entered the main pass from the south-west and north-west, and between them, on the north and south walls of the deep valley, were the two hills of a conical form, having steep rocky sides, with small wadies running up behind so as almost to isolate them. See the Geographical Background. One of the rocky crags was named Seneh, and it is interesting to know that the word has been transferred from Arabic to English in the name of the medicinal *senna.*

III. JONATHAN'S FAITH AND DARING, verses 6, 7. Verse 6 continues the narrative begun in verse 1, the intervening verses being parenthetical and giving particulars of the situation. *Let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised,* these non-Israelites, a term of reproach applied especially to the Philistines. *It may be that Jehovah will work for us,* continued Jonathan; *for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.* Jehovah is not limited, he is not dependent upon his human helpers, he will have no difficulty in saving either with many or with few. Recall Gideon's three hundred. The Greek version of the armorbearer's words reads: "Do all to which thine heart inclines; behold; I am with thee, as thy heart so is my heart."

IV. JONATHAN'S REASONING, verses 8-12. Jonathan plans to approach in the ravine till they stand below the Philistine garrison. *If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you, then we will stand still and will not go up unto them,* for such an answer would indicate genuine preparedness and courage. *But if they say thus, Come up unto us, then we will go up,* for this answer would indicate that the Philistines felt so secure that they were too self-confident and careless. *For Jehovah hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us.* The answer will indicate God's will in the matter.

When they had approached near enough for the Philistines to see them, the latter cried out contemptuously, *Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves:* see 1 S. 13.6; Judges 6.2; 15.8. Then they called down to the two men with mocking voices, *"Come up to see us, and we will show you a thing."* The rock was steep, they probably thought it impossible for the two men to climb it, certainly they did not suppose two men would dare to attack a garrison, and so they ridiculed the two. Jonathan was now sure that God would give the enemy into their hands, and he bade his armorbearer follow him.

V. JONATHAN'S VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINE GARRISON, verses 13-16. The Philistines seem to have "turned in" and gone to sleep, and the next thing they knew they were being attacked and killed or put to flight by those two daring Israelites. *And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet.* He was swifter than an eagle and stronger than a lion, 2 S. 1.23. *And the Philistines fell before Jonathan.* Either they had set no watch or the two men were hidden from their view while climbing the cliff, and the sudden attack surprised them. *And his armorbearer slew them after him.* The armorbearer finished what Jonathan began. Saul's watchman over in Gibeah saw that *the multitude melted away and they went hither and thither.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And Ahijah, wearing an ephod, verse 3. His presence is noted, and the fact that he was wearing the ephod is especially mentioned, to record the fact that he was at hand to give the divine sanction or refusal of the king's plans through the oracle. See verses 36-42. The means by which this oracle of the Urim and Thummin was consulted is not known.

High Priest Wearing an Ephod

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. Who was the first judge to deliver the people from the Philistines? (Judges 3.31) What judge delivered his people from them together with the Ammonites? What later judge "began to destroy" the Philistines? What have you heard about this enemy in the time of Eli? What did they capture from the Israelites? How did Gideon show great bravery? How did Ruth? The boy Samuel? Saul? What judge of Israel proved that God can save by few as well as by many, and how did he prove it?

The Philistine Peril. Saul had come to the kingdom in a time of national danger, and it was his own tribe of Benjamin that was in the greatest peril, for the Philistines had occupied the heights of Gibeah and Gebah and Ramah, and the passes of Beth-horan and Michmash. His first duty was to drive the enemy back to their own land along the Mediterranean coast. The ascendancy of the Philistines is vividly shown in these words: "There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and with Jonathan his son were they found."

Saul's Disobedience. On his first opportunity Saul had proved himself a king, a courageous and skilful leader, delivering Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites. But the first time his obedience to the divine will was put to the test, he failed. Samuel, the prophet, God's messenger, had charged him not to engage in the campaign against the Philistines till he arrived to offer sacrifices. Saul waited until the seventh day, and then, because the people had begun to scatter, he offered sacrifices himself. As king he had this right, but for this act of disobedience, Samuel declared that his kingdom should not continue forever. (This may be another version of that rejection of Saul which is our next lesson. The two, though different, have much in common.)

The Battle of Michmash. It was Jonathan, Saul's son, who struck the first blow in the war for freedom. After the return of the Israelites from their rout of the Ammonites, Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison at Geba, and thus caused the Philistines to assemble for war. A great multitude encamped at Michmash. Dividing into three companies, they began to plunder the country. The terrified Israelites took to their caves and pits, and some fled across the Jordan. Of the three thousand men that Saul had summoned, only six hundred "trembling men" were left. His kingdom was on the brink of destruction. It was at this critical moment that Jonathan, strong in the faith that Jehovah was with him, accompanied only by his armorbearer, daringly surprised the Philistines on the heights of Michmash. The prowess of the two young men was aided by an earthquake which increased the panic into which the enemy was thrown. The Israelites whom they were holding as slaves mutinied; those who were hid in the caverns of the neighborhood and Saul and his followers from their distant height of Gibeah, saw the commotion and all rushed to the pursuit of the enemy. Down the rocky defile of Beth-horon, down into the valley of

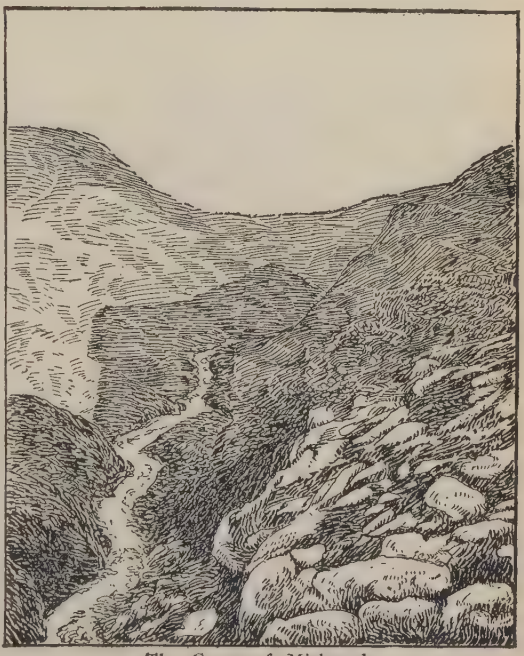
Aijalon they drove the Philistines and routed them so completely that they were kept at bay until the close of Saul's reign.

Saul's Vow. In the midst of the battle Saul had declared a fast until evening, and had invoked a solemn curse on any one who should disobey. Jonathan was ignorant of this, and he tasted the wild honey which he found in the forest. When Saul learned this, he prepared to put Jonathan to death, but the people interposed and rescued Jonathan, for they justly ascribed the victory to him, "he hath wrought with God this day."

The Time. Many years, twenty to twenty-five, have probably passed since our last lesson. Saul reigned forty years, according to Paul's statement in Acts 13.21, and he was apparently a young man when he came to the throne. (Notice that in the R. V. the word *forty* in 1 S. 13.1 is put in italics and in brackets, and the statement in the margin is that the number is lacking in the Hebrew text and is supplied conjecturally.) His son Jonathan has now grown to manhood.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The central mountain chain which extends north and south across Canaan is broken by the Great Plain of Esdraelon. South of that Plain it is broken by many deep valleys or passes. There was a regular route of trade across this range south of Bethel, which crossed from the Jordan to the Mediterranean: on the east the pass that leads up from the Jordan was called the Gorge of Michmash; and on the west the pass that leads down to the seacoast was called the Vale of Aijalon. On the southern side of this deep pass was Geba; opposite on the northern side of the pass, the Philistines were encamped at Michmash. There was a sharp rock on the South, now more rounded, called Seneh, and another one on the north, called Bozez.



The Gorge of Michmash

Saul and his trembling six hundred were encamped at Gibeah, which was back of Geba, about an hour and a quarter's distance towards the south. Yet on the northern extremity—evidently the Migron—where Saul was encamped, he was not so far away that he could not see the commotion in the Philistine ranks across the pass at Michmash.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Be on your guard lest your pupils find today's lesson merely an entertaining story of reckless daring which turned out well. Bring out the situation in Israel, the Philistine peril, and the faith and courage of Jonathan. "Recklessness is no part of courage," well says Phillips Brooks. "When Cromwell and his men gave the sublime picture of heroic courage which illuminates English history, it was not that they undervalued the enormous strength of what they fought against; it was that they saw righteousness and freedom shining out

beyond, and moved toward their fascinating presence irresistibly." Such were the motives that actuated Jonathan, and such were the motives that actuated our own brave heroes whose death we commemorate on this Memorial Day.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: HOW TWO MEN PUT AN ARMY TO FLIGHT

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Saul has now been king for many years. He had a fine family of boys and girls—three boys and two girls. The eldest son was named Jonathan and was a brave yet modest young man. "Now it fell upon a day"—thus our lesson about him and his armorbearer begins. That sounds almost like the beginning of fairy stories, "Once upon a time." But this is a true story. Who will tell it?

How Two Men Put an Army to Flight. (Tell the story vividly. Picture Jonathan alone, wondering if God would save his people through him, ready to give up his life for his country.) Some people would call his a "mad adventure," but Jonathan did not go about it in a mad way. He consulted his armorbearer, told him what he thought of doing and found that his armorbearer was a man after his own heart, prepared to help him through thick and thin. And he was equipped not only with courage but with a splendid faith. He believed that God would give him the victory. "We are only two," said Jonathan, "but that does not matter to God. Numbers are of no account with him. He can win a battle with two as easily as with two thousand." No wonder Jonathan succeeded.

How we May Do Difficult Things. One summer two of us were at the bottom of a big mountain, looking up its steep side and wondering how ever we could climb to a place some thousands of feet above us, where grew a rare flower we were anxious to gather. The slope was sharp, and the difficulty was made greater by the fact that large rocks were strewn everywhere, some of them so big that three or four would fill this church. When we had almost given up hope, we noticed at the foot of the mountain a little path. It was a mere tiny track, just broad enough for one person, so small that we could only see it for a short distance. Yet as we followed it we found it opened up before us, here zigzagging along the mountain side, here winding in and out among the rocks. It led us over slopes we had thought too steep to be climbed, until in the end we got safely to the place which, as we had looked at it from below, seemed quite beyond our reach.

Now it is often like this in life. There is some hard thing God calls us to do, and we look at it and say we could never manage that. Then we find a little path of duty, and take a few steps along it. Bit by bit it opens before us, and we see that after all there is a way up, though at first we felt sure there was none. At length we have got to the spot we thought we could never reach. Do not let us forget that it is as easy to begin a great thing as a little one, for whether we are going into the next street or to the other end of the country, we have only to take one step at a time. By just plodding on we may in the end conquer something that seems as terrible as the precipice up which Jonathan won his way.—Frank Smith, in Measuring Sunshine.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Psalm 27.1

Give us courage that prevails,
The steady faith that never fails.—Henry van Dyke.

"Our soldiers went across the seas,
And helped win glorious victories.
We keep this day for those so brave,
In memory of the lives they gave."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was "the commandment of Jehovah" which Saul had received? (Verses 1-3.) 2. What part of it did he fail to obey? 3. What excuses did Saul give for his disobedience? 4. What excuse did Adam give for his disobedience? 5. What excuse did Eve give? 6. Do you ever put the blame upon others for something you yourself have done? 7. What was Saul's punishment? 8. Did Saul win a great victory? 9. Did he lose more than he won?

Note-Book Work. VIII. The Lesson Title; three statements about Jonathan; a statement about his armorbearer; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE HEROIC NATURE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Visitors to Edinburgh Castle are told by the guard there that the castle has never been captured but once. Then they go to the most precipitous side of the big rock on which the castle stands, and point out the place where a brave company of men climbed up one night, "tooth and nail, hand and foot," by projecting rock and slender bush, up over an ascent so steep that the guard had not thought it possible any one would be rash enough to attempt the climb. Thus these brave men surprised the guard and took the castle. They did just what Jonathan and his armorbearer did so long ago. Who was Jonathan? What height did he scale? Against what enemy?

The People that Do Know their God Shall Be Strong, and Shall Do Exploits, Daniel 11.32. Exploits are not the deliberate creation of set purpose. They are not works; they are fruits. They are not made; they are grown. They are not the startling surprises of occasional ventures; they are the natural and spontaneous expression of the habits of the soul. A true hero is always heroic. Sometimes his heroism is seen by the public, but he is still heroic when the audience has withdrawn.

If, therefore, a life is to abound in heroic deeds it must have the heroic nature. It must "be strong" if it is to "do exploits." Every other kind of heroism is superficial, and it will pass with the occasion which excited it. We want a heroism which is heroic in its own secret thoughts. We want heroes who slay dragons in private. We want the royal courage which strangles an unworthy impulse as soon as it is born. We want exploits in sacrificial thinking, magnificent conquests of selfishness in the quiet courts of the soul. A real man must wrestle with lions and bears in the jungle of his own spirit, and there he must register a courage of which the world has no account. All of which means that a man must be a hero in the very pith and fiber of his being. It must be his nature to be heroic.

And how can we deal with a man's nature excepting through God? The prophet's word gives us the eternal answer: if a man is to "be strong" he must "know God." And that is not the shallow knowledge of recognition; it is the vital knowledge of communion, it is the partaking of the divine nature. It is the living fellowship which makes a man a branch on the living vine. The life-sap of the tree of life pervades every fiber of his being. He lives, yet not he, Christ liveth in him. In such a life all the fruit shall be exploits, and the flavor of the heroic shall be in everything.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Memorial Day. Jonathan fought bravely for his country and won a great victory, but in another battle he made the supreme sacrifice. On this thirtieth of May America annually honors the memory of all her dead who gave their lives fighting beneath her flag. Originally the day was sacred to those who fell in our Civil War for human freedom; it has now appropriately come to include our latest heroes who fell in the great World War.

Will you not commit to heart and to life these words from an editorial in The Congregationalist?

"If the highest ideals for world peace, world justice and world democracy are not realized, it will be because we who live today do not use aright the great opportunity bought with the blood of millions, the flower of the world's young manhood. Because our fathers won the war for the Union and freed the slave, our boys of this generation have been able to win the war which makes possible world federation and freedom for all in bonds of peace and righteousness.

"Not all who fought and fell had formulated for themselves the ideals that they promoted with their lives, but there should come to us as from our heroic dead these words of John Oxenham:

"By the red deaths we have suffered,
By the fiery paths we trod,
By the lives we gave All Lives to save—
We call you back to God.
We call you from your trifling
With the petty things of life;
We cry aloud for a new world vowed
To world-redeeming strife."

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

What is my counsel? Choose a hero. Then
Make him your study—temper, brain and nerve,
Till he has grown your stronger self. And when
Weak, morbid impulse comes on you to swerve
From the sane path, his grafted strength shall serve,
To keep you true to God, your soul, and men.—E. C. Lefroy.

Men can no more leap into sudden heroism than into sudden scholarship; heroism is the scholarship of the soul, only mastered by a thousand difficult lessons.—Dr. J. W. Dawson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When were the Books of Samuel written? 2. In Samuel's address at Gilgal, what did he say king and people must do if God was to be with them? 3. What was Saul commanded to do? 4. Why was this necessary? 5. What did he do? 6. How did he try to excuse himself? 7. How did Saul show his vanity? (1 S. 15.12.) 8. Greed? 9. Cowardice? 10. What false statements did he make? 11. What do you think the best things in Saul's character? 12. The worst things? 13. What was Jesus' royal way of obeying, as expressed in Jn. 6.38?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Saul write II. Saul's Brave Son Jonathan and his Exploit.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE VALUE OF INITIATIVE

Additional Material: Joshua 14.12-14; 1 Chronicles 17; Romans 15.20; Hebrews 11.23-29.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. One of the most attractive characters in the Bible is Jonathan, son of Saul. In the account which we have before us today we see two of his good qualities, qualities which all great leaders possess—Unbounded faith in God and remarkable initiative.

What is initiative? "Ability to originate," says the dictionary. Shall we call it the power to think out and act upon important lines of action? Faith and initiative work wonders. "Faith—I mean faith in a higher Will which imposes our duties and guides our judgment," writes Dr. Douglas Mackenzie, "is a wonderful stimulant of initiative and a repressor of rashness. The man who daily seeks the will of God will plan and dare even where without faith he would be lax and lethargic. Moreover, the man who might be impulsive and rash will, by his daily waiting upon God, receive restraint and humility, which produce tact and insight."

How did Jonathan first show initiative?

The Initiative of our Soldiers. On this Memorial Day it is fitting that we recall the deeds of our soldiers, living and dead. We are all familiar with their record in the Great War. We know how during the gloomy days of March, 1918, when the British Fifth Army was in retreat, six hundred American engineers who were at work behind the lines threw away their tools and with some British engineers seized rifles and forming themselves into a rampart held the line till reinforcements came, held it for seven long and bloody days. They were not there to fight, yet when they saw that they were the only ones who could stem the tide, they rushed to the rescue. Was not that wonderful initiative?

Two months later our men performed a marvelous feat at Cantigny, when they held it in the face of fierce counter attacks by the Germans, who were determined to give a stern lesson to "those green and presumptuous Americans." You know the story of the fighting of our marines and regulars at Chateau Thierry in the early days of June: the enemy had penetrated to thirty-nine miles of Paris, when our men were hurriedly thrown into battle to save the day. And at Belleau Woods where nest after nest of German guns were concealed our men advanced with fixed bayonets in their four-wave formation, the second line rushing over the dead bodies of those in the first line whom the guns had mowed down, the third following the second, the fourth last of all, till they succeeded in killing the gunners and in turning gun after gun upon the enemy.

Mr. Otto H. Kahn, in an address before the Convention of American Bankers in the fall of that year, asked these pertinent questions:

What is the underlying cause for the phenomenon that our boys, taken from

the most diversified walks of life, brought up in surroundings and in a spirit which are the very negation of martial disposition, became in an incredibly short space of time soldiers of first rate efficiency; that our business men, farmers, mechanics, college boys are making competent, indeed excellent officers; that our West Pointers, taken from small army posts or office positions in Washington, were found qualified generally not only to command large bodies of troops, but that amongst them were discovered men fitted, when the emergency arose, to plan and execute the business undertakings of war on a stupendous scale with a high degree of organizing and administrative ability? Why did our commanding officers, our engineers and others at various French ports, at our army bases, along our great line of supplies, in a strange country, under conditions entirely new to them, demonstrate the capacity of rapidly sizing up situations, of boldly meeting and overcoming difficulties, of vigorously cutting the red tape of generations, of accomplishing to the admiring amazement of our French friends and comrades things which the bureaucratic routine of ever so many years had found itself impotent to deal with?

I have heard these questions asked and debated a good many times lately both in England and France, and the consensus of replies was this: "You in America have always been a nation of private enterprise and individual initiative. Your incentive has never been to get a governmental title or a bureaucratic position. You have had no caste, or fixed class, either aristocratic or bureaucratic. You have given almost unlimited, perhaps too unlimited scope to ambition, ability, force, imagination, hard work. Under the stimulus of these conditions you have produced a race—daring, keen, quick-witted, adaptable, self-reliant. The American today, as we see him in the officers and men of your forces, and in the business men we have met, is the product of sturdy individualism."

Don't be Sheep. Some years ago, the writer was looking at a flock of sheep in Franklin Park, Boston. They were nibbling grass contentedly, when suddenly, for no apparent reason, one of them began to run. Immediately the one next him ran, too, and the next, and the next, and so on, until the whole flock was running as hard as it could. That is said to be one of the characteristics of sheep. It is even said that if the leader happens to pitch over a precipice, the entire flock is likely to follow on to their destruction. Why should any creature —even a sheep—be so silly?

Not long after, the writer passed through a town where there is a large preparatory school for boys. He noticed that a peculiar kind of overcoat was much in vogue. Each coat was cut like every other coat, and every coat was startling in its color effects. Apparently, every boy in town who was able to, had one of those coats. How he would have liked to see one boy who had deliberately chosen another kind!

Once he visited a girl's school. It seemed to him that it did not make any difference whatever whether he heard one girl or another speak. They all used the same local slang, and so far as they could, spoke in precisely the same tone of voice.

The sheep tendency seems to be natural to human nature, but why, after all, should we be sheep? Why should we allow any boy or boys in our town to decide what we shall wear, or say, or do? Often it is wise and right for us to do as others are doing, but let us decide whether or not it is wise or right! Let us not follow thoughtlessly, like sheep, in the wake of others. Nature loves variety. Not one leaf in all the forests of the world is identical with another leaf. Not one soul on earth was meant to be the echo of another soul. God gave to each of us a mind. Let us use that mind to think for ourselves. God gave each of us an individuality. Let us remain individuals!—Youth's Companion.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When were the Books of Samuel written? 2. What does Ex. 17.8-16 record about war with the Amalekites? 3. What is said about the destruction of the Amalekites in Dt. 25.17-19? How do you explain the order recorded in verse 3? 5. What impression did Saul evidently wish to make upon Samuel by his greeting? 6. For what purpose had Saul doubtless spared Agag? 7. What do you think of the excuses which Saul gave? 8. What weaknesses do you find in Saul's character? 9. Saul acknowledged that he had sinned, but what was his attitude toward his sin? 10. What does the statement in verse 11 that God repented an act mean? 11. Where in the Psalms is the thought of verse 22 expressed?

SAUL'S FAILURE

Golden Text

Thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah hath rejected thee. 1 Samuel 15.26

LESSON 1 Samuel 15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.33-40, 57-60

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 14.47-52

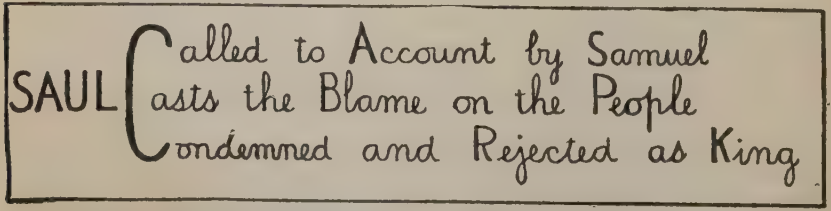
1 SAMUEL 15.13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. 16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; 18 and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah? 20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. 22 And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship Jehovah. 26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. SAUL'S COMMISSION TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT UPON AMALEK AND HOW HE PERFORMED IT, 1-9. *Go and smite Amalek, because of what he had done to Israel, when he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt.* This ancient offense is recorded in Exodus 17. 8-15; Dt. 25.17-19. The spies reported upon their strength (Num. 13.29), and when the Israelites entered Canaan contrary to command the Amalekites defeated

them. After their settlement in Canaan the Israelites were constantly harassed by these marauders who "came in as locusts for multitude" and destroyed their crops and carried off their herds (Judges 6.3-6). It seemed to be a question now which should survive, the Israelites or the Amalekites. Samuel declared it to be God's will that Saul should *utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.* This command seemed right to Samuel, the most enlightened man of his time. "It may have seemed to the statesman of that time that there could be no safety whilst Amalek remained unsubdued. Is it not in this way that even so-called Christian nations have treated the native races? But, in the growing spirit of humanity, such wars (of annihilation) would not be permitted, and certainly would not be viewed as the direct commission of heaven. We are dealing here with the earlier stages of the nation's vision of God, and must remember that the Bible only gives us the history of the progress of revelation; and generally without passing judgment on the action it narrates" (F. B. Meyer).

Saul carried out the commission in part. After getting the Kenites to leave, lest they suffer with the Amalekites, he destroyed the latter, but *Saul and the people spared Agag,* the King, *and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good.*

II. SAMUEL REBUKES SAUL FOR HIS DISOBEDIENCE, 10-19. *Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king.* Samuel was convinced that Saul was not the right man for the kingship, that he was not ruling as God would have him rule, that it was God's purpose to remove him and put another in his stead. The expression *It repenteth me,* is uttered from the human standpoint. The Divine Nature is not changeable: God is not a man that he should repent (Num. 23.19) is quoted by Samuel in verse 29: I, Jehovah, change not, is Malachi's message (Mal. 3.6). "Repentance in man denotes change in himself: repentance in God denotes change in man" (Wood). *He is turned back from following me.* "This was Saul's real sin. He would no longer be the follower and servant of the Lord, but would be absolute ruler in Israel."

After wrestling all night in prayer with God, Samuel started forth to seek Saul. Saul had been to Carmel and *set him up a monument* to exalt himself in the victory over the Amalekites, and then he went on to Gilgal, there to offer sacrifices in celebration of the event. *Blessed be thou of Jehovah* were Saul's words of greeting to Samuel when they met. This was a common form of salutation, yet use of it here may indicate a guilty conscience and a desire to conciliate the prophet by graciousness. Then, like many another guilty one, Saul sought to forestall the accusation which he felt was coming by professing his innocence. *I have performed the commandment of the Lord,* he proclaimed.

Assyrian Representation of Carrying Off Spoils Taken in Warfare

What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? Full well Saul knew that the command had been to spare nothing; how can he account for the large booty? And Saul said, *They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen.* How cowardly and weak Saul appears as he tries to shift the blame from his own shoulders to those of the people! Compare Aaron's excuse for the golden calf at Sinai, Ex. 32.21-24. And then Saul added that this booty was saved for a good purpose, *to sacrifice unto Jehovah.* The greater portion would become theirs for a feast. *The rest we have utterly destroyed,* he continued. Note that Saul would have a share in the obedience but none in the disobedience! The Hebrew word translated *utterly destroyed,* means *devoted.* A person or

thing "devoted" was regarded as consecrated to God, and could not be reclaimed. A man or a beast "devoted" must be put to death (Lev. 27.29). The spoil of the Amalekites, having been "devoted" to God, did not belong to the Israelites, and therefore Saul could not rightly offer them in sacrifice to God.

Stay, said Samuel. He would listen to no further hypocrisy. *Though thou wast little in thine own sight*—thus he recalled to Saul his own words when he was anointed king, our lesson two weeks ago—*wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?* He was in authority, and could have restrained the people, had the fault been theirs. After recalling the anointing, and the command given him, Samuel demanded: *Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah but didst fly upon the spoil?* Thus graphically Samuel pointed out that it was greed which led to the saving of the spoil. Saul had been directed to destroy the spoil as thoroughly as the people, it was to be a solemn judicial execution of a sinful race, but the Israelites had treated the occasion as they would an ordinary warfare and had greedily enriched themselves with the possessions of their enemy.

III. SAUL'S EXCUSE AND SAMUEL'S ANSWER, 20-23. Saul repeated his assertion that he had obeyed the command, although admitting that he had brought back Agag (to grace his triumph, much as did the Roman conquerors with their enemies), and that the sin concerning the spoil had been the people's.

Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? solemnly questioned Samuel. Compare Amos 5.21-24; Hosea 6.6; Micah 6.6-8; Ps. 40.6-8; Isa. 1.11-15; Jer. 7.22. "Sacrifice without obedience is sacrilege"(Moody). *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* No amount of careful attention to ritual will atone for wilful neglect of duty. Compare Christ's teaching in Mt. 9.13; 12.7, and his approval of the scribe who quoted these words, Mark 12.33.

The real cause of Saul's disobedience Samuel then declared: *For rebellion is as* bad as *the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as* bad as *idolatry and teraphim.* Self-will lay at the root of his action. In *witchcraft* there may be an allusion to Saul's zeal in exterminating witches (1 S. 28.9). "All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry," observes Delitzsch, "because it makes self-will, the human I, into a God."

IV. SAUL'S REJECTION AS KING, 24-31. Saul professed repentance. *I have sinned,* he cried, but in the same breath he blames the people—*I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah,* was Samuel's verdict, *and Jehovah hath rejected thee from being king.* Saul remained king many years longer, but from this time on he must have felt that he was no longer God's chosen representative, and he knew that the fate of his dynasty was sealed, no son of his would be his successor. Compare Demosthenes' words: "It is not possible, O Athenians, that a power should be permanent which is marked with injustice, perjury and falsehood."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Teraphim, verse 23. The teraphim were household images supposed to bring the blessings of food, health, etc., to the home, and they seem to have been reverenced as idols and consulted oracularly. They were often in human forms, some have been discovered with a human head on a brute body, and others the reverse of this. In the time of the Judges the teraphim were worshipped by an entire tribe, as told in the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Judges.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What good qualities have we found in Saul? What were his words that indicated "he was little in his own sight" when Samuel told him he was to be king? What sort of leader did he prove to be at first? To whom did he ascribe the victory over the Ammonites? When God's command had been disobeyed in the wilderness, what excuse did Aaron give Moses? (A lesson of last year, Ex. 32.)

Success Leads to Defeat. Saul was successful in his wars with Israel's enemies, the Moabites and Ammonites on the east, the Edomites on the south, Zobah on the north, and the Philistines on the west. Prosperity made him

presumptuous. He returned from his latest victory over the Amalekites flushed with success, arrogant and self-willed. The prophet Samuel had given him his commission to utterly annihilate the Amalekites, and destroy all their possessions. How he failed and was rebuked, is the theme of our lesson. It was really a test whether the king would be ruled by God through his prophet Samuel, or whether he would be a self-willed despot. He proved to be the latter.

The Two Accounts of Saul's Disobedience. See page 29.

Saul's Attitude toward his Sin. His guilt had been found out, he feared the consequences with the people of the prophet's scorn. "I have sinned," he cried, but the words were those of a suppliant cringing from the consequences of his sin, rather than of a sinner penitently craving pardon. He besought Samuel to pardon his sin and come and worship with him. But like Cato the Censor, reiterating that "Carthage must be destroyed," the prophet repeated Saul's doom. As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of his robe to detain him, and tore it. The prophet saw in this a symbol of the tearing away from Saul of his kingdom and the giving of it to a better king. Again Saul acknowledged his sin and begged Samuel to honor him before the people and turn with him to worship. Samuel yielded in this, and then demanded that Agag be brought before him. With his own hand he killed Agag and then returned to Ramah. He never again came to see the king.

The Places. The Amalekites were a nomad people who lived south of Judah. Carmel was not Mount Carmel, but a place about seven miles south of Hebron. From Carmel Samuel went to Gilgal, which had been the scene of Saul's crowning.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The world has just lived through a war in which the aggressor sought to utterly despoil the country attacked, and did not hesitate to slay multitudes of women and children. The horror of the whole world at Germany's deeds shows that in our age the spirit of Christ rules, not that of Old Testament times. Few classes above the Primary will fail to question the reason for the extermination order given Saul. Do not refuse to discuss the question, and do not let pupils go away with a wrong view of God.

Saul is a most interesting psychological study. It is in a lesson like this, especially with the topics assigned by our Lesson Committee, that a teacher needs to be on his guard against teaching in a way that is interesting to himself, instead of in the way that will interest and help his pupils. The whole subject, of "devoting" an enemy to annihilation, of offering bloody sacrifices, of the relation of prophet and king, belongs only to the far away time and place we are studying, but the underlying religious truths have practical lessons for us all.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS. HOW SAUL LOST HIS KINGDOM

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. An agent of the Bible Society had won many friends among the boys in a village of Morocco. Absalem, one of them, wanted to be a muleteer. The agent told Absalem that he would be responsible for the mule and the pack, and asked if he would obey every command. "I will always obey you in everything," the boy replied.

They started out on their first trip, and soon came to a river. Evidently it had been in flood the day before, for the sand-banks were steep and high. What happened we will let the agent tell in his own words.

"Now, Absalem, we shall have to be careful," I said. "You must wait here until I find an easy place to ford, and when I have done so I shall come back and lead you across, for I don't wish the tent and bedding, and our food and the Scriptures to be damaged by the least drop of water. Are you listening?"

"Nam ya, sidi" (Yes, my master).

I left him, and, taking a zigzag course, I found a place where I could get over with comparative ease. Then I turned my horse's head, meaning to retrace my steps and guide Absalem over, but at that moment I heard a splash in the river! Absalem had disappeared.

I might have guessed it. Instead of waiting he had disobeyed my orders and tried to follow the course I had taken. But he lost his head by looking at the

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whirling water underneath, and then the mule stumbled, and down it went, taking the pack and all under the water!

This was scarcely the moment to ask for an explanation; down I jumped off my horse, and, getting out my jack-knife, rushed into the river—without waiting to remove my clothes—and cut the cords of the pack, pulling it through the water to the other side. Thus the pack was saved, though what the contents were like I did not dare to think; but the mule couldn't get up, and I was afraid it would drown and that would have been a serious matter for me, for, alas! the mule was borrowed. Absalem pulled at the reins, while I extricated its fore-feet from the weeds with which they were entangled, and between us we got it safely out.

What a pretty picture we made, dripping wet, tired and hungry, and our food all spoiled! The tea, sugar, bread and butter were a mass of pulp. As we sat in the sun drying our clothes, I had a serious talk with Absalem. "Why did you not wait?"

"My master," he began penitently, "it was Satan who whispered into my ear, saying, 'Surely you, a *Moslem*, are quite as able as a Nazarene to cross the river without aid!' so I listened and obeyed him. But, my master, you know I am sorry, and would lay down my life for you."

I told him the story of Saul's disobedience. If you know it you will see the lesson which I tried to impress upon Absalem that day.

How Saul Lost his Kingdom. The Amalekites were to be exterminated. Years ago in the march to the Promised Land, they had been Israel's enemies and in all the years since they had been a thorn in Israel's side. Their practices, their idolatries as well as their hostility, were a peril to God's people. But their time was up. God had determined to punish them, and Saul was chosen to do the work. "Wherever the carcass is," says Jesus, "there will the eagles be gathered together." Wherever men and women sink into a corrupt condition, there God's judgments fall.

The story of how the Amalekites were destroyed shows us a great victory and a lost crown. Saul gathered his army and went out to battle. The Amalekites may have fought well, but they had no chance against those who knew they were doing the work of God. The Amalekites were beaten and slaughtered, put to the sword without mercy. Saul was triumphant, and his nation was delivered from a long time peril. But though Saul stood there flushed with victory he was a loser. He had lost what had become very dear to him—his crown. He had beaten the Amalekites and lost his kingdom. Can a man be victorious and yet be defeated at the same time? He can. William Hohenzollern as Kaiser of Germany won a victory in Belgium which lost him his kingdom. You may get your way and lose your friends. You may have success, yet lose your reputation. You may win and yet through the way you win lose your honor and the respect of your fellows. Take care that your victories are right ones—or you will lose more than you gain.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15.22.

Who wears a crown must fear to see
Both crown and kingdom slip away;
Who rules himself a king shall be,
Secure unto his dying day.—Arlo Bates.

It is every man's business to do the will of God.—Robert Falconer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whose son was David? 2. Whose grandson? 3. Whose great-grandson? (Ruth 4.17.) 4. How was David chosen to be king? 5. Why was he chosen? 6. By what does God judge a person? 7. What does 1 S. 2.3 say God judges?

Note-Book Work. IX. The Lesson Title; a statement about the battle; what Saul did; a statement about obedience; what Samuel declared; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: WHY SAUL FAILED

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There is an old story of a monk who refused obedience to St. Francis, his superior. St. Francis ordered a grave to be dug deep enough to hold the man standing upright, then at St. Francis' order the man was lowered into the grave, and his associates began to shovel the earth

over him. When the man was buried up to his knees, St. Francis stooped down and asked him: "Are you dead yet? Is your self-will dead? Do you yield?" There was no answer. The man in the grave was inflexible. The burial continued: the earth reached his waist, his shoulders, his lips. Once more St. Francis repeated his question, "Are you dead yet?" There was no relenting in the stern countenance of his superior, resistance was useless. A few moments more, and the earth would entirely cover the already suffocating monk. Then his iron will broke. "I am dead," he returned, and the burial was stayed.

Saul needed the lesson which that monk received. Since the day when he was made king position and glory had spoiled him. He had become very self-willed. He was no longer willing to give absolute obedience to Jehovah, his superior. In his treatment of Saul, Samuel shows himself as stern and inexorable a man as St. Francis.

Saul did not Obey the Voice of Jehovah. What was the task given Saul? What was he especially told to do? Why was this demanded? (For the story and its explanations, see The Lesson Text Explained and Illumined.)

Among the legends of the Middle Ages there is one about a fierce dragon that came up out of the sea and devoured men and women and children. A few brave men went to attack it, but their horses and dogs fled at the sight of the monster, from whose eyes flames shot forth, and from whose mouth floods of water poured, and they themselves were killed. The dragon was held to be invincible, and the Master of the Order of St. John forbade any knight to imperil his life in a vain attempt to slay the monster. There was one knight, however, who thought he could free the world from such a scourge. He went to a forge and made an iron dragon just like the real one, flames and all. Then he led his horse and dogs against this sham dragon again and again till they became accustomed to it, and found it harmless. When they were no longer afraid he went forth to meet and slay the real dragon. Great was the rejoicing among the people and loud were their praises of the hero. But when the knight brought the dragon's head to the Master of the Order he was met with a stern rebuke. In that Order strict obedience was regarded as the most important of all virtues, and the Master said to him: "Thou hast been disobedient. Thou hast broken the vow of obedience to commands. No longer art thou a son of this Order." The knight hung his head in shame and humbly turned to leave, and then, the legend says, the Master called him back, exclaiming with tears in his eyes: "Thou art worthy to be a Master among us, for thou hast true humility. The man who conquers his own spirit is greater than he who slays many dragons."

Saul, the king of the Israelites, was given a fiercer enemy than this fabled dragon to conquer, and with the task a very definite command to obey. He performed his task, but disobeyed the command, and when he was told that he had been disobedient, he did not hang his head in shame like this young knight, for he had never learned to conquer his own spirit.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Great may be he who can command
And rule with just and tender sway;
Yet is diviner wisdom taught
Better by him who can obey.—Adelaide Proctor

Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.—Mary.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What history do the Books of Samuel cover? 2. Why was Samuel mourning for Saul? 3. Where is Bethlehem? 4. What is said about Jesse in 1 S. 17.12? 5. What relation was David to Ruth? (Ruth 4.17.) 6. Who was born in Bethlehem "of the house and family of David"? (Lk. 2.1-7.) 7. How did Eliab resemble Saul in appearance? 8. How was height regarded among oriental people? 9. Does the rejection of Eliab indicate that a good appearance was not desirable? 10. Did David have a good appearance? 11. Lincoln? 12. Washington? 13. In what does God's way of judging persons differ from man's way? 14. What does Ps. 78.70-71 say about the choice of David? 15. What does 1 Ch. 29.9 say about God's seeing men? 16. What sort of man pleases God, according to Ps. 147.10, 11?

Note-Book Work. Part III. How Saul Lost his Kingdom.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE WEAKNESS OF SAUL'S CHARACTER

Additional Material: 1 Samuel, chapters 13; 28; 31.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Two weeks ago we saw many admirable qualities in the young man who was chosen to be the first king of Israel. The first king in such a monarchy had a most difficult position. It was almost inevitable that the first experiment should be a failure, Dr. Geikie thinks. "The position was totally unlike anything hitherto known. While in name the chief magistrate, the king was such only in subordination to the supreme will of the Invisible King, Jehovah, expressed through specially commissioned prophets. On every side the royal power was limited and directed by the authority of men who had no political office in the state. Everything was new, untried, strange. The first reign was at best only an attempt to set the new kingship at work in its singular subordination to theocratic principles. But it served a great end: for if Saul had not thrown light on the demands and conditions of the new monarchy, there could have been no David. He was only the step by which the latter mounted to his throne, safe through the failures of his predecessor."

The study of Saul's failure is a difficult one because only three typical incidents are given in the period which apparently embraced thirty years of his reign. In those incidents we see that Saul was a strange mixture of religiousness and superstition, of impulsiveness and stubbornness, of courage and fear, of cringing and rash self-will. "The position which he occupied demanded executive ability, tact, the power of organization, and, above all, patience and persistence. In these maturer qualities he was deficient; they are rarely the possessions of fiery, impulsive natures. In addition, Saul was unable to understand and to appreciate the higher, more exalted religious experiences and ideals which were already becoming the possession of the more enlightened souls of seers like Samuel."

Saul's Disobedience. There came to Saul a crisis which was the turning-point in his life. The poet calls such a crisis "the tide in the affairs of men." On a special occasion he was put on probation, the opportunity was given him to prove himself true to an obligation, to faithfully perform the thing he was set to do. He failed in that critical hour, and the whole of his after life was changed. He yielded to temptation, and from that time his character that started out so nobly, degenerated, its selfishness and insane jealousy grew, till his life went out in disgrace and disaster. So it is with us all. "There are occasions when the course we take will be a decisive one for our whole future, when a victory over some particular temptation, an act of generous devotion to duty, a gallant effort made on the side of right, will establish our character—we might almost say, for ever; and when, on the other hand, a weak surrender of principle, a yielding to passion or impulse, will force us on a downward path from which it will be difficult, and may be impossible, to return." See the Text Explained and the Second Topic.

Saul's Contemptibleness. That the king whose word was law should attempt to excuse his violation of the prophet's command by saying he could not help it, the people were responsible, was one of the basest features of his sin. It was evidently not premeditated. The prophet came upon him unexpectedly. Saul's gracious greeting and prompt falsehood did not deceive the prophet. "What about this bleating and this lowing that I hear, how can you explain this, if you have utterly destroyed the Amalekites and their possessions as you claim?" the prophet asked. "Ah, yes, those oxen and sheep," the king returned while he hastily meditated what answer to give. "But those belong to the people, it was they who spared them." Having shifted the blame from his own shoulders, he proceeded to excuse the people, claiming that the animals had been spared for the best of purposes, to offer sacrifice to the God of their beloved prophet Samuel.

When Aaron made the golden calf he put the blame upon the people. "Thou knowest the people that they are set on evil," he said to Moses when the latter arraigned him for that sin. In that case, too, the motives were declared good, for Aaron said he had built an altar before the image and proclaimed a feast to Jehovah.

Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, and men and women and boys and girls are ever trying to shift to others the responsibility for their own mis-

deeds. They are seeking some scapegoat to bear their sins, even as the high priest on the Day of Atonement symbolically laid the sins of the Hebrew people on the head of the goat and sent it to perish in the wilderness.

Saul was a Grafter. In recent times we have coined a new word for a very old thing. We refer to the word *graft*. A grafter is not necessarily one who is openly or even secretly dishonest. A grafter is not necessarily a cheat or a thief. He is one, however, who lacks a fine sense of feeling as far as his own material welfare is concerned, and he gives himself the benefit of the doubt whenever any close question as to the right to material benefit comes up. It is characteristic of cases of graft as distinguished from cases of outright fraud that a very plausible argument can be made for the grafter; and sometimes only unusual force of direct moral insight can withstand the reasons for the graft which may suggest themselves. In Saul's case the argument was all his way, except his own conviction as to the divine will. Saul reasoned himself out of that conviction. There was enough of disobedience about Saul's conduct to bring Saul down from the high level of suitableness required by real demands of kingship. It was the glory of the idea of kingliness as wrought out by the people of Israel that the king was to be a leader in self-sacrifice. The mind of the people was to be trained to think of the title "king" as one to be applied to God and to the Christ, so that any touch of selfishness in the king would work not only against the immediate welfare of Israel but would work against the lofty religious purpose of God's dealing with Israel.

When the incisive question of Samuel after the battle, "What meaneth then the bleating of sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of cattle which I hear?" was put to Saul, Saul no doubt could have replied with more reasons than he actually gave. He might have said, first of all, that he had earned the spoil. And in a sense he had. No doubt Saul's leadership was largely responsible for the victory. He had made the disposition of the troops, he had aroused the soldiers with his magnetism. Even in our own day we insist, in the affairs of the navy especially, that the leader in command of a victorious fleet is entitled to a large share of whatever prize money there may be. We recognize that the leader has played the indispensable part in the victory. But the greatest leader is not the one who is thinking of getting all that he may in any sense be said to have earned. The sin of Saul consisted not in having kept for himself something that he had not earned, but in not rightly disposing of what he had earned. He went out to the battlefield with a very definite understanding as to what was to be done. Because of selfishness he fell away from the conviction of duty with which he started.—Bishop Francis J. McConnell, in the Sunday School Journal.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. To receive benefits from the society of those whom we condemn, and yet to exclaim against the pollution of it,—to set at naught obvious duties for the sake of the religious ascendency of our own peculiar views, is the modern likeness of the piety of Saul when he spared the best of the oxen and the sheep to sacrifice to the Lord in Gilgal.—Dean Stanley.

2. The dangerousness of an autocrat in any age or country. Qualities of character common to Saul and the Ex-Kaiser of Germany. Both wished to rule as king by divine right; both were headstrong and determined to have their own way at any cost; both tried to put the blame on others; both were hypocrites; both refused to believe that there are moral and spiritual forces in the world which they could not bend to their own will, etc.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What history do the Books of Samuel cover? 2. Why did the elders come to meet Samuel trembling? 3. Was Samuel strictly honorable in his statement as to the purpose of his visit, verse 2? 4. What is the meaning of "sanctify yourselves," verse 5? 5. How was Samuel made aware of the will of Jehovah? 6. What do 1 Ch. 28.9; Isa. 55.8, 9 and Jer. 17.10 say about the way God judges men? 7. What is said in Ps. 139.1-7 about God as the searcher of men's hearts? 8. Do you think David understood why Samuel anointed him? 9. How was his life as a youth a good schooling for the place he was destined to fill? 10. What is David called in 1 S. 13.14 and Acts 13.22? 11. In what sense is this meant? 12. How does Browning describe David in his poem called "Saul"?

A SHEPHERD BOY CHOSEN KING

Golden Text

The spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. 1 Samuel 16.13

LESSON 1 Samuel 16.1-13 DEVOTIONAL READING John 10.11-18

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Psalm 2

1 SAMUEL 16.4 And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5 And he said, Peaceably; I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him. 7 But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. 11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Samuel's Arrival at Bethlehem
Seven Sons of Jesse Interviewed
Samuel Sends for David
Shepherd Boy Anointed King

I. SAMUEL'S MISSION TO JESSE, 1-3. *And Jehovah said unto Samuel,* that is, Samuel in his inner consciousness was made aware of Jehovah's will, *How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel?* Saul's failure to measure up to the standard expected of him had been a source of great grief to the prophet; now Samuel realizes that he must take definite action about Saul's successor. *Fill thy horn with oil:* this was the first step to take. The horn was a flask for oil. In the time of Solomon a horn with its anointing oil was kept in the sanctuary, and with this Solomon was anointed (1 K. 1.39). The next step was to take the journey to Bethlehem, for the Lord's chosen king was one of the sons of Jesse, a native of that city. But Samuel feared to go, for *If Saul hear it, he will kill me,* he said. *Take a heifer*

with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to Jehovah: here was a way out of his dilemma, as a matter of prudence he can mention the holding of a sacrifice as the object of his visit, and keep silent about the more important reason for his coming. "The question has often been raised," observes W. G. Blaikie, "whether this diplomatic arrangement was an act of duplicity and deceit. It was concealment of a thing which Samuel was under no obligation to divulge. It was not concealment of which the object was to mislead any one, or to induce any one to do what he would not have done had the whole truth been known to him. When concealment is practiced in order to take an unfair advantage of any one, or to secure an unworthy advantage over him, it is a detestable crime. But to conceal what you are under no obligation to reveal, when some important end is to be gained, is quite a different thing."

II. SAMUEL'S RECEPTION IN BETHLEHEM, 4, 5. When Samuel reached Bethlehem *the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably?* Samuel's duty as judge was to go from town to town, render judgment and punish offenders (1 S. 7.16), and the elders thought he was coming to Bethlehem for this purpose. "Hundreds of years after this (about a thousand), when the heavenly light appeared in the same place to the shepherds, they, too, were sore afraid; but there was as little ground for fear in the one case as in the other"(Taylor). Samuel reassured the men by telling them that he had come to offer sacrifice. *Sanctify yourselves,* he bade. Before participating in any sacred act the Israelite "sanctified himself" by ablutions and by refraining from whatever would make him ceremonially unclean. Samuel himself superintended the purification of Jesse and his sons. Jesse was now an old man, 1 S. 17.12.

III. THE CHOOSING OF DAVID AS KING, 6-12. When they came to the sacrificial feast, Samuel looked upon Eliab, and said to himself, *Surely Jehovah's anointed is before me. But Jehovah said unto Samuel:* the voice was an inward one, the prophet is described as carrying on in the depths of his conscience a dialogue with God, as the sons of Jesse, one after the other, pass before him. *Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature,* said his inward monitor. Eliab was another Saul, tall and handsome. *Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.* Man judges by seeming; Jehovah, by being. "What thou art before thy God, that thou art and nothing more!"

Abinadab, then Shammah, and then four more sons, seven in all, were called one by one, to pass before Samuel, and each one was rejected. *Are here all thy children?* asked Samuel? *There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he is keeping the sheep,* returned Jesse. Samuel bade Jesse send for him, declaring that they would not sit down to the feast which was to follow the sacrifice until he arrived. "The great consecrations of life are apt to come suddenly without warning: while we are patiently and faithfully keeping sheep in the wilderness, the messenger is hurrying toward us with the vial of sacred oil to make us kings"(Saxe Holm). David appeared —*ruddy* (whether this refers to his red cheeks or to his auburn hair is uncertain), *and withal of a beautiful countenance,* and at once Samuel knew that *this is he,* the one chosen by God.

IV. THE NEW SPIRIT GIVEN FOR THE NEW DESTINY, verse 13. *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren.* It was a prophetic designation of the men whom God, in his own way and his own time, would place upon the throne—a secret sign and declaration of God's fore-ordained purpose." Did his brethren know the meaning of the anointing? They may have thought that Samuel anointed David to be his successor as prophet, for it does not appear that Samuel told the others, or even David himself, the object of the anointing. Josephus says, "Samuel anointed him, and whispered in his ear, and acquainted him that God chose him to be king." *And the spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward.* "It is the oil of the heavenly anointing that consecrates his life and transforms his career into a service. It is the fact that he was himself possessed, gripped, by the mighty hand, grasped by the eternal purpose, which awakens in every faithful and true heart the spirit of obedience and trust"(Simpson). *So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.* The sacrificial feast was probably first held, though it is not recorded.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE.

The height of his stature, verse 7. Height and strength were regarded as belonging by right to royalty, says Kitto. When in battle less depended on military skill than upon the bodily prowess of the chief in single combats, or in the partial actions with which most battles commenced. It was natural that the people should take pride in the gigantic proportions of their leader, as calculated to strike terror into the enemy, and confidence into his followers; besides, it was no mean advantage that the crest of the leader should, from his tallness, be seen from afar by his people."

This is he, verse 12. How contrary it was to the custom of oriental lands to choose the youngest son for preferment, Mrs. Ghosn el-Howie shows (in Sunday School Times). A native Syrian princess, with wealth and prestige, perceived that the younger of her two sons was in favor, and was about to be appointed sub-governor. "May it please thee," said she to the consul, "to appoint X—, the older of the two?" "Only Allah could appoint him," was the rejoinder. Though X— was all but imbecile, yet the worthy lady would have preferred him because he was the older of the two. Samuel and Jesse, like this princess, and all orientals, in fact,—would have chosen the eldest. As for the youngest, he would have been the very last to be considered.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Where is Bethlehem? What woman went with her family from Bethlehem to Moab? Who returned to Bethlehem with her? What vow did Ruth make? What did Ruth do in Bethlehem? Whom did she marry? What was her son called? Who was her grandson? Her great grandson? Tell how Saul came to Samuel and was anointed by him. Tell how Samuel himself as a lad was called for a purpose by God.

After Saul's Rejection. All night long, we are told, Samuel cried unto the Lord when it first became known to him that Saul was not the man for the place to which he had been exalted. After his interview with Saul at Gilgal, Samuel realized that it was time to cease his mourning for Saul and take steps toward securing the right one to succeed the king when God should execute his judgment upon him. It was made known to him that one of the sons of Jesse, of the city of Bethlehem, was the right one for the Kingdom, "a man after God's own heart."

The Ancestry of David. David was the son of Jesse, the grandson of Obed, the great grandson of Ruth and Boaz. From his great grandmother Ruth, the Moabitess, and his ancestress Rahab of Jericho, there was alien blood in his veins. "It required three generations for the descendants of aliens to become members of Israel, and thus David could be reckoned a full Jew, though his father still stood in a measure outside the congregation," says Dr. Geikie.

Various dates are assigned for the year of David's birth. It is helpful to keep in mind that he lived about a thousand years before Christ.

The Date. The time of David is given in round numbers as 1000 B.C.

The Places. *Bethlehem* is associated with the lives of Jacob and Ruth. David the great grandson of Ruth, always had a great affection for the city of his birth: see 2 S. 23.14-16. For Bethlehem see p. 184, and for Ramah, p. 208. It was a twelve mile trip southward across the rugged hill-country of Judea for Samuel from Ramah to Bethlehem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Are here all thy children?" If they are not here, why are they not? If seven-eighths of the members of your class are present today, are you well-content without finding out why the one-eighth is absent? Often one or more will be absent necessarily, but more often he could come and would come if you showed your interest in him, inquired about him, sent another pupil to tell him he is missed, or, better still, went yourself to his home or wrote him a letter. Many pupils never know how much their presence or absence concerns their teacher.

You should be solicitous not only for your pupils' attendance at Sunday-school, but for their attendance at Church as well. That day in Bethlehem the prophet Samuel summoned all the people to a sacrificial feast, a popular religious service, and in those days the children were a part of such gatherings. They still are in the Jewish synagogues of today. Their presence in the Christian churches also should be a matter of course. Children belong in the church with their parents, but if the parents of your pupils are indifferent, willing that their children shall attend or not as they please, yours is the opportunity of creating the desire.

Senior and even adult classes sometimes need a word of exhortation upon the subject of church attendance.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A KINGLY SHEPHERD BOY ANOINTED TO BE KING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Saul is still king, carrying on his work without any one suspecting that God had rejected him. Saul knows the time is coming when neither he nor any of his descendants shall sit on the throne of Israel, but he has not the least idea that God has already taken steps to appoint his successor. While Saul is engaged in administering justice or in planning a new campaign, over in Bethlehem there is a family gathering where Samuel is choosing the youth who shall be the greatest king that Israel ever had. The family are descendants of one whom you know and love, Ruth the Moabitess. Jesse, the father of the family, is Ruth's grandson, and he has the largest farm belonging to any one in Bethlehem. He has also a large family, seven sons in all.

The Choice of David. How was David chosen? Not hastily nor on impulse. There was promptness in the choice of Saul's successor, but care was taken that the choice be the right one. Each son in the family of Jesse was called in and carefully judged by the prophet Samuel, God's messenger. One after the other they came, till all had passed before him. Each man had his chance of the crown Samuel had to give, each one's qualifications were duly weighed and found wanting. Then David, the youngest, was sent for. He was out in the field caring for the sheep, when a brother or servant came and told him he was wanted in the house. When he came there was wonder on his face, for he marveled that the great prophet had summoned him, the youngest, who was a shepherd lad. And he was amazed when Samuel poured the sacred oil upon his head. He knew then that God had chosen him for some special service —to become a great captain, perhaps, or to become a prophet like Samuel. After the feast Samuel went back to his home at Ramah, and David went back to his sheep. Perhaps David visited Samuel later and learned that he was destined to be the king of Israel.

We sometimes wonder who will take a great leader's place. We look around and cannot see any one who is fit to do so. But we need not worry. In school, in factory or in office, God is already calling, preparing those who are to take the places of the great leaders. Just think of it! In quiet and obscure places, in the din and bustle of great cities, are the boys and girls today who will be the great people of the future.

Why was David chosen? Not on account of his appearance. He was good to look at, beautiful of countenance, fine of physique. But these "fine points" did not win the crown of Israel's kingdom. Eliab, the oldest son, was a splendid appearing fellow, and he greatly impressed the prophet at first glance, but Eliab was not God's choice. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. It was not on account of David's calling. He was only a shepherd lad, his was a lonely task. Nor was it on account of age. Eliab was a man of experience: David was only a youth. Age had nothing to do with the matter.

The choice of David was made because of what he was in himself. He had a fine spirit. Something looked out of David's eyes and illuminated his face that was missing in all the other sons of Jesse. It was the glow and power of a noble and beautiful soul. God's choice is always based on that. Fitness of mind and soul is the essential in God's sight for the tasks of his Kingdom.

An Instructive Fable. Once a child who thought well of herself was walk-

ing along the street and saw another child, who was poorly clad. "How wretched it must be," she said to herself, "to be poor and shabby like that child! How thin she is! And how her patched cloak flutters in the wind; so different from my velvet dress and cloak."

Just then an angel came along. "What are you looking at?" asked the angel. "I was looking at that girl," said the child. "So was I," said the angel. "How beautifully she is dressed!" "What do you mean?" said the child. "I mean this one coming toward us. She is in rags, or at least, if her clothes are not ragged, they are wretchedly thin and shabby." "Oh, no," said the angel. "How can you say so? She is in sparkling white, as clear as frost. I never saw anything so pretty. But you, you poor little thing, you are indeed miserably clad. Does not the wind blow through and through those flimsy tatters? But at least you could keep them clean, my dear, and mended. You should see to that."

"I don't know what you can mean!" said the child. "That girl is a ragged beggar, and my father is the richest man in town. I have a white dress and coat, trimmed with expensive fur. What are you talking about?" "About the clothes of your soul, of course!" said the angel, who was young. "I don't know anything about souls," said the child. "I shouldn't think you did!" said the angel.—Laura E. Richards.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 16.7.

Don't judge by size: a fly can do more harm than an elephant.—Youth's Companion.

Jehovah is a God of Knowledge,
And by him actions are weighed.
—Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving, 1 S. 2.3.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the occupation of Abraham? 2. Of Isaac? 3. Of Jacob? 4. What was Moses doing when he saw the burning bush? 5. What was David's early calling? 6. Learn the 23rd Psalm. 7. Tell the parable about the Lost Sheep. (Lk. 15.3-7.) 8. What does the parable say about what the Good Shepherd does for his sheep? 9. What does Jesus call himself in Jn. 10.11?

Note-Book Work. X. The Lesson Title; how David was chosen; why he was chosen; how God judges; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE ROAD TO PROMOTION Or, CHOSEN FOR A GREAT WORK

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The story of David occupies a greater space in the Old Testament than that of any other hero. In what books of the Bible is it found? It is a stirring story, as you well know, for there was no monotony in David's life. Events followed close one upon another, alike when he was at Saul's court, in exile, and on the throne.

What was David doing when first we hear of him? Can you describe his appearance? Dean Stanley says: "He had red or auburn hair, such as is not infrequently seen in his countrymen of the East at the present day. His bright eyes are especially mentioned, and he was remarkable for the grace of his figure, well made, and of immense strength and agility. In swiftness and activity he could only be compared to a wild gazelle, with feet like hart's feet, and with arms strong enough to break a bow of steel. He carried a switch, or wand, in his hand, such as would be used for his dogs, and a scrip or wallet round his neck, to carry any thing that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey."

Tell the story of Samuel's choice of David to eventually succeed Saul as king.

What God Gives to Youth. What David's anointing meant is that neither youth nor anything else prevents giving us ultimately the highest duties for which we are fit. Be careful, however, to realize that God rarely reveals to us those duties until the time comes for us to undertake them; and always his calls are first calls to special duties. David was not told by Saul that he was anointed for the kingship. For him the anointing simply meant that in an especial sense he was called to consecration and service of God in common ways. So hereafter—as results showed—he felt it was laid on him to do all he attempted in the best way he could. When he watched his sheep he tended them well. When he practiced on his harp he remembered that God was listening.

Thus by thoroughness he fitted himself for a task that was greater than he knew. God does not give to a youth so much great tasks as the opportunity of fitting himself for them in years to come. And God gives his finest chances to the man who does his best while he is waiting.—J. G. Stevenson.

To Young America. You are such a splendid, eager army of youth! Your hearts are beating high with the passion for worthy deeds and great ideals; and that is the rightful heritage of youth. With you love for America is a living flame. You long to be able to do. It is for you that America faced her sacrifice and suffered—that she might pass on to you a heritage of security and peace; and so of you, too, she asks a sacrifice. She says:

"I shall need you for greater tasks and greater problems than the world has ever faced before. There will be railways to be built, cities to be restored, disease to be conquered, inventions to be made, the rights of the poor and the ignorant to be safeguarded, the laws of nations to be confirmed. Those are tremendous tasks. They will require all that you can give—body, mind and soul. Untrained men and women cannot do those things for me and for the world. I shall need you. Will you be ready when I call?"

Every boy and girl who can should send back this pledge:

"For the sake of my country, which now as never before needs trained men and women who can think clearly and act decisively and keep clear the things of the spirit, I pledge myself to use every opportunity that I can get to train myself in body, mind and spirit, so that I can give the greatest possible service when my country calls me."—Condensed from the Youth's Companion.

In Line for Promotion. The simple duties which belong to keeping sheep or to getting one's lessons at school, to meeting one's obligations in some modest position in office or store, or in doing one's best in a factory or on a farm, become a kind of dress rehearsal for the larger duties which lie ahead. If a man knows his lines and takes his part effectively upon the narrower stage of action, he is in line for promotion to a more important rôle. You will find whole regiments of young fellows who drag along, scimping their work and slighting those opportunities which are right at hand. They are saving up their energies to do something splendidly effective week after next. But week after next never comes to such men. It is always today, and today in their eyes seems ever small.

If those men were already on the quarter-deck as captains of great ocean liners; if they were already bank presidents sitting in handsome offices of their own; if they were already journalists of the first rank writing editorials for metropolitan dailies, they would do what their hands and their minds found to do with their might. But in this day of small things they feel that fidelity and skill would be thrown away. They have mixed up the words of the promise—they think it reads, "You have been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over everything." When a man is going up-stairs he will put his foot on the step which is at the bottom and then take the other steps in order. The same rule holds in the great business of living a man's life and doing a man's work in the world.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in Five Young Men.

How God Prepares Us for Promotion. He prepared David by making him a shepherd. David as king had, what Saul never possessed, the power of gaining the affection of the people as a whole; and the mingling in his character of simplicity and dignity may have had much to do with it. In the long watches with the sheep he learned to see God in nature. How full the Psalms are of this feeling—Ps. 19; 104. The sense of God, time to think, knowledge of nature, courage to deal with the attacks of wild beasts upon the flocks, music, poetry—all these things were the result of that opening training.

How little Mackay of Uganda thought when he was doing drudgery work as an engineer's apprentice that this was going to be the best of all trainings for the practical and pioneering mission work that was afterwards to be his. How little did James Chalmers, playing about as a small boy among the fishing boats on Lock Tyne, realize that the ability he was gaining in handling open boats under all kinds of conditions would be the very first necessity of his subsequent work in New Guinea.—R. Bruce Taylor, in Sunday School Chronicle.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Do the work that's nearest,
Tho it's dull at whiles,

Lifting when you meet them
Lame dogs over stiles.—Kingsley.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.—Ecclesiastes.

"If what you are you seek to know, good youth,
Just ask yourself—and tell yourself the truth."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the word *Psalter* mean? 2. Who wrote the Psalm? 3. Learn the 23rd Psalm. 4. Why is the shepherd always with his flock in the East? 5. From what evils does an Eastern Shepherd guard his sheep? 6. What uses have his rod and his staff? 7. What words of the Psalm express fearlessness? 8. Trust? 9. Contentment? 10. What does Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about trusting God for everything? 11. What is said about David as shepherd in Ps. 78.70-72?

Note-Book Work. Begin a Life of David. Today write Part I. David the Shepherd Boy Anointed King.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE POSSIBILITIES OF YOUTH

Additional Material: 1 Samuel 16.17-23; Ecclesiastes 11.9 to 12.1; Philippians 3.12-14; 1 Timothy 4.12; 1 John 2.13, 14.

Suggestions for Beginning the Lesson. Samuel is on his way to Bethlehem: for what purpose? Why do the elders of the city meet him trembling? What does Samuel tell them is his object in coming? Is this his primary reason? Ought he to have told them his chief reason for coming? Was his course a subterfuge considered allowable in those days, or was it right according to Christian standards? To what extent may we be governed by expediency? Why does Samuel bid them sanctify themselves, and what did this mean? What relation is Jesse to Ruth the Moabitess?

We need not stop to recall the very familiar story of the way in which the seven sons of Jesse passed in review before Samuel and were rejected. We are told of a lively dialogue that took place in Samuel's mind as he weighed each man before him. What difference did the prophet perceive between the human and the divine judgment of a man? A man's reputation is what other men see in him: his character is what God sees.

What do you think David's reputation was in that family? Evidently he was unappreciated by his brothers and even by his father. It never occurred to Jesse that Samuel would care to see David, his youngest son who was off tending sheep, engaged in work which in eastern countries is usually allotted to servants, or the despised of the family. David was so unlike his brothers. His father probably could make nothing out of the dreamy lad, and thought him romantic and impractical. David counted for little in that family, but he counted for much in the eyes of Samuel who judged him as God judges.

"Latest born of Jesse's race,
Wonder lights thy bashful face,
While the prophet's gifted oil
Seals thee for a path of toil.

"Go! amid thy flocks awhile,
At thy doom of greatness smile;
Bold to bear God's heaviest load,
Dimly guessing at the road."

How Latent Talents Were Discovered. Mr. Schwab is fond of telling how, when he took charge of the Carnegie Steel Works at Homestead, he noted a little fellow there who carried drinking water to the men. Very shortly the water boy was promoted to clerical duties, and no matter at what hour of the day or night Mr. Schwab made a tour of the works, he was sure to find the clerk at his post—and Mr. Schwab never could learn when the youth slept. When an assistant superintendent was needed, the ex-water boy was selected, and when, later, a man of unusual caliber was needed to manage the company's important armor

plate department, the executives unanimously agreed that the ex-water boy was the one man for the job. That boy was Alva C. Dinkey, who developed into one of America's steelmasters and a man of great wealth.—American Magazine.

David was in Training for Great Things. It was a strange school for a future king—the lonely sheepfolds of Bethlehem. So we think who look at the outward appearance. David was forgotten and neglected by his father; he was scoffed at and trampled upon by his brothers; but you cannot sour, or starve, or poison, or pervert a nature like David's. There is a well-spring of piety and of poverty in David that makes David independent of adverse circumstances. Nay, he takes prosperity out of adversity. That ruddy stripling has his harp and his sling and his father's sheep, and what more does he need to make him happy? He has the glorious traditions of his far-off father Israel to dream about—Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Joshua, and Jephthah, and Samuel: his poet's eye doth glance from the one to the other till they are all with him as he holds his flock under the stars of Bethlehem.

"Now, as they were going along and talking, they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. The boy was in very mean clothes, but of very fresh and well-favored countenance, and as he sat by himself he sang. Then said their guide, Do you know him? I will dare to say that this boy lives a merrier life, and wears more of that herb called heart's-ease in his bosom, than he that is clad in silk and velvet. So they hearkened, and he sang:—

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

And, again: "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" And, again, this: "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." No; that was not an erroneous school for David. All his days the remembrance of those days was dear to him.—Dr. Alexander Whyte, in Bible Characters.

Choosing One's Life Work. The investment of a life is of such far-reaching import to the young people involved that some fundamental and safe principles for deciding this question of one's life work should be clearly stated and carefully studied. One way of stating these principles would be as follows:

1. Enter that calling that will provide growing satisfaction and ample scope for your fully developed powers.
2. Enter that calling that will provide opportunity for the largest possible unselfish endeavor and will most contribute to the welfare of mankind.
3. Enter that calling that is most in harmony with the will of God for the world and for your life.—Joseph C. Robbins.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. When one man fails him God always has another man ready.

3. The Youth of David. See Lecture XXII of Stanley's History of the Jewish Church; Five Young Men, by Charles R. Brown.

4. What did Samuel mean in 1 Sam. 13.14 by saying that David was "a man after God's own heart"? In our estimation of ancient characters we must keep in mind the political, religious, and social conditions of the times in which they lived. Samuel did not mean that David was sinless, judged even by the standards of that day. He meant that David was chosen for the work he would accomplish, that where Saul had gone wrong he would go right, where Saul had been self-willed he would yield his will to that of the Lord, where Saul had considered himself the highest head of the people, he would reign as God's ambassador.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Psalms? 2. Are there two themes or is there only one in the 23rd Psalm? 3. Does "I shall not want" mean that one who trusts God will never suffer deprivation? 4. How does Paul say "Thou shalt not want" in Phil. 4.19? 5. What does "for his name's sake" mean? 6. What is the literal meaning of verse 3? 7. What is its spiritual meaning? 8. What is meant by "the valley of the shadow of death"? 9. How does Peter say "Fear no evil" in 1 Peter 5.7?

THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD

Golden Text

Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23.1

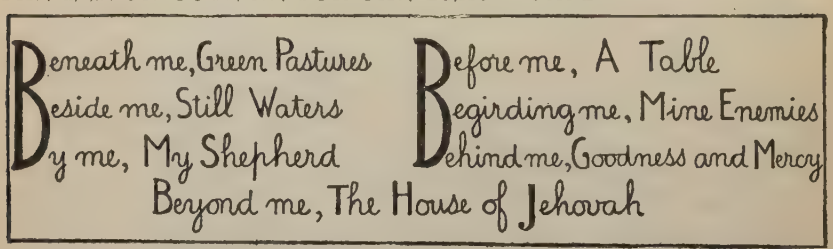
LESSON Psalm 23 DEVOTIONAL READING Ezekiel 34.11-16

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS John 10.1-18

PSALM 23.1 Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters
3 He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


Beneath me, Green Pastures
Beside me, Still Waters
By me, My Shepherd
Before me, A Table
Begirding me, Mine Enemies
Behind me, Goodness and Mercy
Beyond me, The House of Jehovah

NOTE. A knowledge of shepherd life in the East is so essential to the understanding of this Psalm, that our section "Light from Oriental Life" is here incorporated.

I. THE GREAT SHEPHERD FREES FROM CARE, verse 1. *Jehovah is my shepherd*—how this recalls the beautiful words of Christ, I am the good shepherd, Jn. 10.11. Because God is my shepherd, *I shall not want,* or as Dr. Briggs translates the Hebrew, *I have no want,* the imperfect tense indicating not future, but a present of habitual experience. This does not mean that I never suffer deprivation, but that I am not without that which is good for me, because the Divine Shepherd, like the human shepherd, cares for the needs of his flock. Jesus bade us have this feeling of freedom from care in his words: "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be clothed?" And Paul knew this freedom from care when he said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content."

II. GOD'S BOUNTY IN FOOD AND REST, verse 2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.* Ordinarily the shepherd does not feed his flock except by leading them where they may gather for themselves; we must remember that there are no pastures in the East where sheep can be left to take care of themselves and that the shepherd is always with them. In the noonday heat (Song of Solomon 1.7) the sheep are taken to some shady spot, where there are a few trees, or there is a cave, or the shadow of an overhanging rock. *He leadeth me beside still waters. Unto refreshing waters,* is Dr. Briggs' translation. There

are few streams in the grazing lands of Palestine which are not dry in the summer months, and by "the still waters" the Psalmist thinks of wells or fountains. Compare Rev. 7.17.

III. THE GOD-APPOINTED WAY, verse 3. *He restoreth my soul: he guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* The Hebrew word translated *soul* means *life:* see Psalm 19.7. *Name* stands for *self, character: for his name's sake* means *in accordance with his own character.* See 1 S. 12.22; Ps. 106.8; 1 Jn. 2.12. In this verse the literal and spiritual meanings are closely blended. The Psalmist seems to think of the shepherd finding the wandering sheep and leading them back into right and safe paths, and also of the life of the soul as beset with perils and temptations from which it only can be safe under the divine guidance. And God restores the soul that has strayed from righteousness, not because that soul is deserving of such mercy, but "for his name's sake," because of his infinite pity and compassion.

IV. IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW, verse 4. *Yea* (more than this which has just been said), *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.* Or, *through deep darkness,* the margin of the Bible translates. Any one who has seen the deep, narrow gorges of the hill country of Judah, which are dark and gloomy, and abound in caves where wild beasts or robbers might dwell, can understand how the Psalmist might speak of them as "the valley of the shadow of death." An artist's masterpiece was a valley of shadows, in which midnight darkness was wonderfully brought out on the canvas. But when he was dying, he called his attendant and said: "Bring me my masterpiece and my brushes and paints. I find I have made a mistake. The valley is flooded with glory, and I must change the picture." *I will fear no evil.* "Sometimes a heavy fog settles in the valley like a veil, hiding the shepherd from his sheep. Poor sheep! they have lost sight of their shepherd, but he makes his presence known to everyone. He calls, (Taa, Taa, Ho, Ho, Ho!) and at once they realize that he is there. By and by, as the fog begins to disappear, the moon sends her light down through the hills. Then, if the shadow of the rocks and trees frightens the sheep, the voice of the shepherd, acting like magic, quiets them. Watch! a shadow moves. The shepherd watches its movements, too, and taking his sling in his right hand hurls a stone at the enemy, the wolf. But while the shepherd is engaged in warding off a wolf from the front, another, which has been lurking behind the rocks, suddenly springs forth and bounds into the very midst of the flock. The sheep become frightened and scatter in all directions. The shepherd's first thought is to gather his flock. He quickly climbs up on to a rock where all can see him, and calls, 'Taa, Taa! Ho, Ho!' Though the wolf is in the midst and has sunk his teeth in the side of some poor lamb, the sheep are not afraid; they seem oblivious to the fact because the familiar voice of the shepherd brings with it courage. Having successfully gathered his sheep, the shepherd immediately crushes the head of the wolf with his rod" (Faddoul Mochabchab). "As the flock journeys on, the leaders will be seen looking up to the shepherd, while the others follow with heads down to the footing, so that you see, for the most part, their bodies only. But let some alarm be heard—some disturbance break out, some hurt befall—at once all heads are lifted, all looking, looking not at the danger, but at the shepherd. Oh, think of this way of peace when all is going well, this way of trust when trouble comes—this lifting of the eyes to the shepherd" (William Allen Knight).

Thy rod and thy staff. These are two implements which every shepherd carries. "The shepherd's dress consists of an unbleached calico shirt, gathered in at the waist by a strong, red leather belt. Hung to the belt, the 'leathern girdle' of Scripture, besides his rude clasp-knife and small leather pouch, or 'scrip,' is a formidable weapon of defense, a stout bludgeon used to protect himself and his charge from assailants. It is generally made of oak, is about two feet long, and often has a large number of heavy iron nails driven into its rounded head, which render it a very deadly arm. Sometimes it is fashioned from a species of willow which is peculiarly light, and at the same time exceedingly tough and strong. The club is easily attached to the belt, being furnished with a noose of cord passed through a hole in the end by which it is grasped. The staff is generally a straight, strong rod. Its use answers to the English shepherd's crook, to guide the sheep, to recover them from danger, to rule the stragglers into order, and at times to chastise the wilful" (James Neil).

They comfort me. Give me a feeling of security in thy presence. "Ah, you should see the sheep cuddle near the shepherd to understand that word, 'they comfort me'! The shepherd's call, 'Ta-a-a, ho-o-o,' and the answering patter of feet as the sheep hurry to him, are fit sounds to be chosen out of the noisy world to show what comfort God gives to souls that heed his voice" (Knight). He is the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. 1.3.

An Oriental Shepherd

V. THE OVERFLOWING CUP, verse 5. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.* Many see here a change of the figure of speech: Jehovah is no longer the Shepherd but the Host; many have pointed out that the situation is that of David before Barzillai, 2 S. 17.27-29. Dr. Briggs explains that he has "guest-right with Jehovah. He is safe and secure, because, in accordance with oriental customs, the host is obliged to protect him against all enemies, at all cost." On the other hand, one can see in this verse also the figure of Jehovah as Shepherd still carried out, "that keynote never lost till the plaintive melody dies at the song's end, all that follows being that one thought put in varying light." From the Syrian Guest I condense this explanation: "Ah, to think that the shepherd's highest skill and heroism should be lost from view as the Psalm begins to sing of it, and only an indoor banquet thought of! The word for *table* here means simply *something spread out* and a prepared meal. There are many poisonous plants in the grass and the shepherd must find and avoid them. There are snake holes in some kinds of ground, and, if they be not driven away, the snakes bite the noses of the sheep. The shepherd sometimes burns the fat of hogs along the ground to do this. Sometimes the shepherd finds ground moles have worked their holes just under the surface. Snakes lie in these holes with their heads sticking up ready to bite the grazing sheep. The shepherd knows how to drive them away as he goes along ahead of the sheep. And around the feeding-ground, in holes and caves in the hillsides there are jackals and wolves, hyenas, and panthers, and the bravery and skill of the shepherd are at the highest point in closing up these dens with stones or slaying the wild beasts with his long-bladed knife."

THOU HAST ANOINTED MY HEAD WITH OIL; MY CUP RUNNETH OVER. If the Psalmist is thinking of a Host, this would be the mark of courtesy to a guest: see Lk. 7.46. On the theory that the thought is still of Jehovah as Shepherd Mr. Knight explains the orientalism as follows: "At the door of the sheep-fold the sheep stand and 'the rodding of the sheep' takes place. With his rod he holds back the sheep while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive-oil and he has cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks or a side scratched by thorns. And here comes one that is simply worn and exhausted; he bathes its face and head with the refreshing olive-oil and takes the large two-handled cup and dips it brimming full from the vessel of water provided for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink.

VI. THE PROVIDENCE WHICH GUARDS LIFE HERE, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING, verse 6. *Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life.* Goodness and lovingkindness are here personified: they follow, pursue the Psalmist. Despite the valley of the shadow and the evil which comes into every one's life, goodness and lovingkindness do pursue the righteous, for he can say—

"The king of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever."

And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever. This expresses the longing of the soul for a sense of continual presence of the Heavenly Father, for joy everlasting in communion with the Divine Shepherd. "The poet's muse takes wing and flies aloft, like some bird of song which rises higher and higher in the skies, warbling still as it goes, till its exultant notes finally die away in the invisible distance of the empyrean blue."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Authorship of the Twenty-Third Psalm. The Psalm is entitled: "Jehovah the Psalmist's Shepherd. A Psalm of David." Yet we have no positive proof that this Shepherd Psalm comes from the pen of David, for the titles of the Psalms, as they stand in our Bibles, were probably not originally a part of them, but were added by very early scholars as their opinion in regard to their authorship and character. But whatever we may be told about its authorship, we can never disassociate it from David, the shepherd lad who was tending his sheep on the hills of Bethlehem when the prophet Samuel came to anoint him king. Its beautiful imagery would come naturally to him, and it seems to breathe the very spirit of his early life. Long years afterward when the shepherd lad was king of Israel, he felt that what he had once been to the flocks committed to his care, that and much more, the Divine Shepherd had been to him. It was a great thought, an inspired thought, that came to him when he said, *Jehovah* is *my* Shepherd, and this is the keynote of the whole Psalm.

The Interpretation of the Psalm. There are several ways in which this Psalm may be understood.

Dr. C. A. Briggs in the International Commentary calls it a Guest Psalm and finds three strophes, each with its own simple and beautiful imagery to set forth the central idea of the Psalm. He thinks it a mistake to suppose that the theme of the shepherd extends beyond the first strophe: the new and parallel figure of the guide takes the people to the same safety to which the shepherd had taken his sheep already in the first strophe. The Psalm expresses calm confidence in Jehovah: (1) as Shepherd, providing his sheep with plentiful pasture and water, 1-3a; (2) as Guide, conducting his companion safely in right paths through a gloomy ravine, 3-4; (3) as Host, anointing his guest for a banquet and granting him perpetual hospitality, 5-6.

By many the Psalm is thought of as containing two themes; (1) Jehovah as Shepherd, 1-4; (2) Jehovah as Host, 5-6. It is said strikingly to befit David's situation in the forest of Hareth. To this forest he had come at the suggestion of the prophet Gad, after having hidden in several places to escape the anger of Saul, his pursuer. Before this, David had been living and enduring many privations in the Cave of Adullam, and now, on entering the Forest of Hareth, and beholding the green leaf, the tender grass, and the rippling stream, he felt his soul restored, and he grasped a loftier conception of the providence of God.

The simplest interpretation, I think, is the best. The Psalm has but one theme, "Jehovah is my Shepherd." It befits the experiences of David and of every one who is very sure of God, of a Personal God whose care is unceasing and whose love is with him throughout the length of days.

An Appreciation of the Psalm. Henry Ward Beecher calls this "The Nightingale of Psalms." He says: "It has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy greater than the heart can conceive. It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching grief, or orphans in their loneliness. It has made the dying slave freer than his master and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind. Nor is its work done. It will go on singing through all the generations of time, nor will it fold its wings till time is ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical for ever."

David the Sweet Singer of Israel. David was born to be king of his people. But his greater birth was his birth as the sweet singer of Israel. David has led the voice of the prayer and praise of men for more than two thousand years. Under his name, so great was his poetic fame, the whole book of Psalms,

written at many various periods, was collected; and more of it seems to me to be his work than modern criticism now allows. But how much or how little we have of him does not matter. The vast tradition of his poetry selects him as great among the greatest; and it is well to stay and mark how his life with his sheep and his early companionship with nature ministered to his poetic genius.

It is not too much to say that a great deal of his power of leading men and forming a disheveled set of tribes into a nation, of organizing a people into a whole, of his command over souls, and of his vast influence, even to the present day, upon humanity, was due to the solitary, passionate, and receptive hours which he passed in the silence of nature, and under the pressure of God, upon the sheep-fed hills of Bethlehem.

And the Psalmist who sang of David also felt that truth when he cried: "And He chose David as his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance." So felt also that other Psalmist, who I would fain think was David himself, who compared the God of Israel in his love and care of his people to the Shepherd who led them to still pastures and by sweet waters, and through the valley of the shadow of death. So felt the prophets when they spoke of the perfect King: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." And so thought Jesus also, who by love was King of men, when he spoke his tenderest parable of the Savior of the lost. No one who thinks of David's success as king can afford to forget that early shepherd education.—Condensed from The Old Testament and Modern Life, by Stopford A. Brooke.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

To his pupils the teacher is shepherd and guide. At once Christ's words come to mind, "I am the good Shepherd," and we recall how he knew his sheep individually, and how he loved them. We as teachers can guide, not drive, our flock, and we can only guide those who love and trust us: we must prove ourselves a true friend to our pupils, for friendship is here the soul of leadership.

Youth is capable of great things if only wisely and kindly led. A teacher's shepherding must be careful and unremitting, wise and tender. He must know what are the pitfalls in his pupils' way—their temptations; what is to them the valley of the shadow—their sorrows.

A teacher must, above all else, lead his pupils to know and follow the Good Shepherd.

The true shepherd's heart is with his sheep; if one is lost he will seek till he finds it. Possibly ninety percent of the pupils who have been lost to the school and the church could have been kept had the teachers all been vigilant and faithful.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE SHEPHERD PSALM

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What is the number of our Psalm which we study today? What do we call it? Who wrote the Shepherd Psalm? What was David's calling when Saul anointed him? Do men get their thought of God from their calling? Does the artist think of God as a Great Painter, the king think of him as a Great Ruler? Some men do. David did. He started life as a shepherd, and he thought of God as a Great Shepherd.

To the Israelites of old the image of God as the Shepherd of his people was very real. The hills of Judea were white with grazing flocks, and the shepherds lived with them and watched over them with tender care. They knew their own solicitude for their flocks and they loved to think of the Divine Shepherd as bestowing the same solicitude for his flock of Israel.

The Lord Our Shepherd. God was not only a Shepherd but to David he was *his* shepherd. Jehovah is *my* shepherd, he said; *I shall not want.* And what sort of shepherd did he think God to be? He thought of God as a *considerate* Shepherd. He was thoughtful and gentle. It was not his way to let his sheep travel till they were ready to drop. He saw when they needed rest and let them lie down in the green pastures. When they were thirsty he led them to the quiet, shady pools. When they were cast down, he restored them, put heart into them again. He was a Shepherd with a great, loving heart.

He was a *careful* Shepherd. It was not his way to drive his flock. He guided them. He never led them into trouble, into a path that ended in a precipice. He always chose the right path, the path of righteousness, the one that brought peace and happiness and ended in the home fold.

He was a *capable* Shepherd. Storms might come and enemies might be round about, cutting them off from the sources of food and drink. But he was never at a loss. He could always satisfy their needs even under such circumstances. He would prepare a table, that is, give them food in the very presence of peril. His skill and resources were equal to every emergency.

He was a *cheerful* Shepherd. If there were stony paths and deserted tracts to cross, or death in dreadful passes—the mountains to be faced, it did not matter. No one was ever afraid. They could brave the shadows and endure the roughness because he was with them. His presence cheered and strengthened them.

He was a *changeless* Shepherd. David had known many shepherds and found some of them very fickle: one could never depend upon them. They would be brave one day and cowardly the next—do their duty one day and neglect it the next. But the Great Shepherd was not like that. He was always the same—good, brave, helpful, kind, resourceful, day after day, week in and week out. What he had been David felt sure he would continue to be. He could rely upon him to show his goodness and mercy all the days of his life.

Now was David right in all this? Is God anything like this? Yes, and kinder, greater, than David knew. How do we know this? Because Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd, and Jesus and the Father are one. And what a Shepherd Jesus was—going after the lost sheep until he found it—laying down his life for the sheep.

The Lord is My Shepherd. There are just two things about the Eastern shepherd that I want you to remember. This is the first—the shepherd knew all his sheep. To us one sheep looks very much like another, but the shepherd saw differences; he knew each individual sheep, he called each by name. And this is the second thing I want you to remember—the Eastern shepherd had often to risk his life for the sheep under his charge. There were wild beasts in Palestine who were always on the watch to harry the flock. David himself, you remember, had to fight one day with a lion and another day with a bear in order to save his sheep from being worried and killed. Now, you must remember those two facts if you are to understand all this little sentence means: "The Lord is my Shepherd." Life, David thought, was full of dangers and perils; temptation was always on the watch to destroy men; but he felt it was all right, because God would take care of him. Just as he had saved his sheep from the lion and the bear, so exactly God would save him from the many enemies that were on the watch to destroy him. "The world," thought David, "is full of men. There are thousands, millions of people in it. But I am not forgotten or overlooked. Just as I know every sheep in my father's flock, so God among all the people of the world knows me. The Lord is my Shepherd."

Every one of us can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." And it is a wonderful comfort to think of God caring for us. Life is full of trouble, temptation, sorrow; it will help us wonderfully to remember, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Now let me tell you a story I have read somewhere to illustrate what I mean. An English gentleman was travelling in Canada, and in a lonely spot he met a shepherd boy. He questioned him about his love and care for the sheep, and when the lad had earnestly affirmed that he loved his sheep and would dare to suffer much for them, the gentleman said: "And you, too, have a Shepherd. He is a Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep. Before I leave I want you to learn a text. You can repeat it on the fingers of one hand, and I want you to repeat it giving a word to each finger: 'The Lord is my Shepherd,' and when you come to the word *my* grip that finger." The boy did so and on his return home told his father the story. Some weeks later the lad was overtaken in a storm. He struggled against it for some time, but at last succumbed, and when the searchers found his poor body under a snow-drift, they found him gripping the fourth finger. In his last moments he had been thinking of the Good Shepherd.—J. D. Jones, in The Game of Life.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Psalm 23.1-6.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Be thou our Guide while life shall last,
And our eternal home.—Watts.

Work to Assign for Next Week. Choose one of the heroes or heroines of our Quarter's Lessons, and bring to class next week an account which shows why you admire this Bible character.

Note-Book Work. XI. Write The Shepherd Psalm from memory.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: TRUSTING GOD TO SUPPLY OUR NEEDS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "The basis of David's life was a profound, joyous trust in God, and ardor of personal love to him, such as had never before been expressed, if it had even found place, in Israel. Jacob had spoken of God as the "Shepherd of Israel," but it was reserved for David to bring that sweet and wonderful name into closer relations with the single soul, and with that peculiar enthusiasm of personal reliance and recognition of God's love to the individual which stamps all his psalms, to say, "The Lord is *my* shepherd."

Those dumb companions of his, in their docility to his guidance and absolute trust in his care, had taught him the secret of peace in helplessness. The green strips of meadowland where the clear waters brought life, the wearied flocks sheltered from the midday heat, the quiet course of the stream, the refreshment of the sheep by rest and pasture, the smooth paths which he tried to choose for them, the rocky defiles through which they had to pass, the rod in his hand that guided, and chastised, and defended, and was never lifted in anger—all these, the familiar sights of his youth, pass before us as we read; and to us, too, in our widely different social state, have become the undying emblems of the highest care and wisest love. We look in vain for another example, even in David's psalms, of such perfect trust in God."

The strength and joy of David's life came from his perfect trust in God. In his earlier years he had very few comforts and very many deprivations, but his trust in God never failed him, he was content, he did not want. What is it to trust in God? Trust has been defined as "That act and habit of the mind by which the truth of God is brought in and made a part of our very being; the act and habit of the mind, the heart, the soul, by which the facts concerning God are made realities." God was an ever-present reality to David. His mind was kept in perfect peace, because it was stayed on God.

How strong and beautiful is the trust that gleams in every line of this Twenty-third Psalm!

How God Helps. "God is up in heaven, and he doesn't care for anybody but himself, but you are right here where I can get at you, and you are willing to help poor people like me, and so I have come to you." These are the words of an Italian woman who came to me recently. She was up to her eyes in trouble.

After I had helped her in several material ways, I said to her: "There is a reservoir of water upon the east side and it is all fenced in so that no one can get at it. It seems to care for nothing but itself, but in your house there is a faucet to which you can go at any time and get the water you need. You praise the faucet and condemn the reservoir! You thank the faucet, but have no gratitude for the reservoir, until you find that every drop of water that has come through the faucet came from the reservoir. When you find this out, you say, "I am thankful to both faucet and reservoir, to the reservoir for sending the water, and to the faucet for giving it to me."

"Oh," she said, "I know what you mean. You mean you are the faucet, and God is the reservoir; that he put it into your heart to help me."

"Yes," I said, "thank God you have come to understand the exact truth, and now you will be thankful, not so much to me as to God, who through me has granted you a little of the more abundant help that he longs to give. And remember this—that others should find the spirit of God in you, as you say you have found his spirit in me. For God's spirit is in you and in all men."—Condensed from Truths that Save, by Frank H. Decker.

The Message to the Belgians. In The Association Monthly a story is told by Alfred Noyes, the well-known English poet. One morning while walking on

a London street he was struck by the slow passage through the crowds of a blind man bearing a wooden sign on a pole. On one side were some words in English, and on the other the same passage in French: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Later in the day Noyes found himself at Charing Cross, one of the great railway stations of London. Evidently something was happening. He pushed into the waiting crowd. Presently the people came through the opening gates from the train which had just arrived. First a group of soldiers dazed and crazed from shell-shock; then stretcher-bearers with their wounded on the way to the hospitals. And then a most pitiable group; stoical women carrying odd bits of personal belongings, old men, and troops of sad-eyed children, the first wave of that tide of Belgian refugees which was to pour so steadily into England for months to come.

It was a moving picture of human desolation, weariness, bewilderment, dread. Suddenly, something seemed to catch the attention of these refugees seeking asylum in a strange land. Some common hope seemed to sweep across their upturned, wistful faces. Ah, there it was! The blind man with the strange words! All unawares that the eyes of the refugees were upon him, he turned his sign so that its French words were toward them, and the company of exiles read this inspiring message which was as new life to their drooping spirits: "L' Eternel est mon berger, je n'aurai point de disette." With this reassuring word—a message from God—in their hearts, the poor people, harried, desolate, driven from home and country, plucked up new courage and faced, with indomitable spirit, the new life that stretched before them.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Let nothing disturb thee,
Nothing affright thee;
All things are passing;
God never changeth;
Patient endurance
Attaineth to all things;
Who God possesseth
In nothing is wanting;
Alone God sufficeth.—Longfellow.

As you go forth into a new day's moral and spiritual adventure, who leadeth you?

In my own hands my want and weakness are,
My strength, O God, is thine!—Bayard Taylor.

Note-Book Work. Part II of your Life of David: David as a Poet. Include The Shepherd Psalm written from memory.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: OUR DIVINE SHEPHERD

Additional Material: Matthew 6.24-34; John 10.7-15; Philippians 4.19; 1 Peter 5.7.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There are so many expressions in the Bible which can not be understood unless we are familiar with Eastern scenes and customs. The Shepherd Psalm which we study today loses all its beauty and impressiveness unless we can picture to ourselves the life of a Syrian shepherd and his "beautiful way" with his flock. I have seen the shepherd alone with his flock on the Judean hills, far off from any habitation, and I no longer wonder that there exists between him and the dumb animals under his care almost human friendship, he looking upon them with the most solicitous regard, and they looking up to him as their provider and protector. I have seen the glaring, ofttimes almost barren, boundless wilderness which is the Syrian pasture land, so different from our fenced-in fields or hillsides where the sheep are left to themselves, and I know that the sheep could not exist there without the shepherd. I have experienced the scorching noonday heat in Syria, and I can appreciate the shepherd's care and skill in leading his flock where there is fresh herbage or fresh water. In Nablous I have heard the hyenas and wolves howling at night, and I can understand the Psalmist's word, Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. And I have looked down into dark, rocky defiles and gloomy gorges of deep darkness as night begins to fall, and I wonder not that the Easterner, who unlike ourselves, does not delight in wild scenery, has named them "valleys of shadow of death." The keynote of our Psalm is in the first sentence, *Jehovah* is my *Shepherd.*

He Leadeth Me. It was nearly sixty years ago that Professor Gilmore

chose the twenty-third Psalm and blessedness of divine guidance as the topic for an evening meeting. He continued to talk to his family about his great theme after returning home, and then sat down and wrote this beautiful hymn so familiar to every one:—

He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

When the hymn was finished, Professor Gilmore gave it to his wife and thought no more about it until several years afterwards when he opened a hymn-book one day and chanced to see it there. His wife had sent it to The Examiner for publication, and a musician had set it to music.

Dr. J. H. Jowett's comments upon the thought of God's leadership are most suggestive. "A guide-post is one thing; a guide is quite another. It is helpful to have written instructions; it is far more helpful to have the leadership of a companionable friend. We might acquire an art from a text-book, but how infinitely more delightful it is to acquire it from a competent teacher. It is the vital human presence which tells. It is the living fellowship which takes the length out of the long road and fills it with inspiring interest from end to end.

"And in the unknown way of life we have a comforting Presence. We have the help of the guide-post, which is our conscience. We have the counsel of the guide-book which is the Bible. But we have something better than both: we have the Lord of the road, who erected the guide-post; we have the all-wise Counselor, who inspired the guide-book. The good Lord does not guide us by maxims or rules. He gives us himself. *He* leadeth me. 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' 'The Lord himself is thy keeper.'

"And so this is the wonderful prospect for the unknown journey—the communion of the Holy Spirit. His companionship is not conditioned by the nature of the road. He will not desert me when the way becomes rough and difficult. Nay, he reserves his choicest inspirations for the sternest parts of the road. He has songs for the night. He has cordials for the oppressive day. He has everything that heart can wish or need. He leadeth me. 'I will trust, and not be afraid.'"

The Divine Leadership. We differ in many things and in many ways; we differ in age and in calling, in physical fitness and in mental equipment; we differ in knowledge and accomplishments; we are greatly different in temperament, and therefore in the character of our daily strife. But in one thing we are all alike—we are pilgrims travelling between life and death, on an unknown road, not knowing how or when the road may turn; not knowing how or when it may end; and we are in urgent need of a Greatheart who is acquainted with every step of the way. We are all in need of a Leader who will be our guide by the "waters of rest," and also in the perilous ways of the heights.

Now how does the Lord lead us? When I turn to the Scriptures I find that the means and methods of divine leadership are many, that the Great Leader is like a wise human leader, and he adapts his ministries to the nature of the child and the character of the immediate need. I can only mention two or three of these varied methods of leadership as I find them in the Word of God.

And here is the first: *"And the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand."* It is the speech of a young prophet, and it describes a leading of God. Let us apprehend the figure. The counsel of the Lord has come to Isaiah like a strong hand, as something he could not escape. He was commanded to confront his people, to oppose them, to leave the majority and stand alone. He was bidden to prophesy the unpleasant and even to predict defeat. The young prophet shrank from the task; he was tempted to silence and retirement; he meditated retreat; but the Word of the Lord came to him "with a strong hand." The imperative gave him no freedom; heaven laid hold on him with holy violence; the invisible gripped his conscience as a man's arm might be gripped, until it ached in the grasp. Now this is one method of leading—a grip like that of a powerful constable.

And here is a second method of leading: *"I will guide thee with mine eye."* How startling the change! We pass from the grip of the hand to the glance of an eye, from a grip as severe as a vise to a touch as gentle as light. We may

be guided by a "strong hand" even when we are heedless of God; we can only be guided by his eye when we are gazing on God.

Let me give an example of those who were guided by the eye. *"They looked unto him and were lightened."* That is guidance by a look. Whilst they worshipped they received the light. Their minds were illumined while they gazed. "They caught the ways of God," and they had a certain radiance of spirit which assured them that they had found the King's will.

Let me give another instance of the leadings of God, and this time from the experience of the Apostle Paul: *"After they were come to Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not."* And what kind of leading was this? It was leading by impediment. It was guidance by prohibition. It was the ministry of the closed door. There came to the Apostle what the Friends would describe as a "stop in the mind." His thought was resisted and had no liberty. He felt that his purpose was secretly opposed by an invincible barrier. In certain directions he had no sense of spiritual freedom, and therefore he regarded that way as blocked. "The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary." I think it is very needful to emphasize this. God sometimes leads us by negations. The closed door is the indication of his will. We assay to go, but the Spirit suffers us not.

But whatever form the divine leading may take, it is not always clear and immediate. Our great Leader sometimes keeps us waiting before we know his will. It is often very difficult to find out what his will really is. Would it be well for it to be otherwise? Would it be best for his will to be known immediately, and without the faintest shadow of doubt?

If the scales of guidance always went down with a bang it might make it easy, but it would never make us strong. The scales of guidance often turn with a hair, and part of life's discipline consists in watching the scales to see how they turn. The consequence is that when we know God's will we have also strengthened our sight. We have refined our powers of discernment in the act of making the discovery. And as we gain from the discipline of watching we also gain from the discipline of waiting. We gain self-control and patience and the noble refinements of hope. And thus we see that obscurity and delay do not imply the divine absence or indifference. The Divine Leader is at work, and his gracious purpose is active even in the apparent inaction.—Condensed from Things that Matter Most, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The Psalmist's Picture of the Blessed Life under the Divine Leadership. It has been a psalm of thanksgiving for the blessings of God, and we should expect it to end in a prayer for their continuance. Neither of these is the Psalmist's last petition. He does not ask that blessings shall continue to lead him, but that goodness and mercy shall follow him. They are not to be the guides of his life, but the consequences of his life. He is to go his way as well as he can, through the pastures and valleys of experience, and after him there are to follow more goodness and more mercy. Perhaps he is still thinking of the oriental shepherd in whose name the psalm began, and in the East the shepherd goes before, and the sheep hear his voice and follow him. Thus the man who has been blessed of God is to go steadily on, and behind him, like a flock of sheep, will follow the good thoughts and merciful deeds of a better world.

Such is the Psalmist's picture of the blessed life. The man who thus goes his way up and down the hills of experience does not have to look behind him to watch for goodness and mercy; they know his voice and follow him. He meets his obstacles and reverses, and as he looks ahead, life may not appear good or merciful; but what he is concerned about is the consequences of his life, and he goes his way bravely to clear the path for goodness and mercy to follow.

"The blessings of his quiet life,"

says Whittier,

"Fell round us like the dew,
And kind thoughts where his footsteps pressed,
Like fairy blossoms grew."

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The orientalisms of the Shepherd Psalm. See The Shepherd Song on the Hills of Lebanon, by Faddoul Mochabchab; The Shepherd of Jebel Nur, by William Allen Knight; The Song of Our Syrian Guest, by William Allen Knight.

REVIEW: THE NOBLE LIFE OF SAMUEL

Golden Text

I will instruct you in the good and the right way. 1 Samuel 12.23

SELECTION FOR READING 1 Samuel 12.1-5, 13-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 2.1-11

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 1.1 to 16.23

A REVIEW FOR JUNIORS

The Life of Samuel. Eli, the old high priest, had a boy who waited on him and ran his errands—the child Samuel of Ramah, given by his mother when he was about three years old. They lived together in the tabernacle on the hill of Shiloh. The great festival which brought Samuel's mother to him once a year, with a blue coat in her hand, was like a birthday to her boy, for it told him that he was a year older. She saw that he was taller, and the old priest said that he was good and clever.

Old Eli was the head of the nation, standing between them and God, as their high priest and judge. He needed to be a strong man to keep such people in order, but he was not. The people worshipped God, but many also worshipped images of Baal and Ashtoreth, the idols of the people they had conquered, and Eli could not stop them. He had also two bad sons—Hophni and Phinehas—who were priests under him. He rebuked them for what they did, but he did not punish them as a judge should, and that caused the people to think lightly of the tabernacle and of Eli its high priest. When Samuel grew older he heard the people complaining bitterly, saying that they hated to bring animals to be sacrificed at Shiloh because of the priests.

It was Samuel's duty to shut the wooden doors of the tabernacle at night. One night as he lay asleep on his mat before the purple curtain he was suddenly aroused by what sounded like Eli's voice calling him. Three times he ran to the side of the aged priest, saying "Here am I." The third time Eli bade him answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." Once more he heard the voice calling. It was a vision or a dream, in which God told him he would punish Eli for not restraining his wicked sons. The next morning Samuel felt a changed boy, for he had had a vision from God—a call to lead the people. Yet he feared to tell Eli, but the aged priest bade him tell him all whether good or bad, and Samuel did so.

Twenty years went past. The boy became a man of thirty, and Eli was nearly one hundred years old, blind and helpless, and high priest still. But the end was near. His sons took the golden ark with them to encourage the people in one of their battles with the Philistines, saying that God would not allow the ark to be taken. But the tribesmen were defeated with great slaughter, the ark was captured, the wicked sons were slain, and the news caused the death of Eli.

Samuel, now a man of fifty and a prophet of God, lived near Ramah. He was chief judge and leader of the people; but they had been conquered by the Philistines and would not obey him. They wanted a king like other nations to lead them into battle. He warned them of what they would have to suffer from a king, but they pressed their demand until he consented. Samuel believed God wished a man of the tribe of Benjamin to be made king, and when he saw the tall figure of Saul, something said, "This is the man!" And thus Saul, seeking his father's asses and coming to the prophet Samuel, found a kingdom.

After Saul had been king for many years, Samuel told him that God wished him to gather an army and utterly destroy the Amalekites. Saul was victorious in the battle, but spared the king and some of the spoils. When Saul told Samuel that he had brought back the finest of the flocks and herds to sacrifice them on the altar to God, the old prophet sternly replied that God would rather have obedience than sacrifice, and that for this disobedience he would reject him from being king.

There came a time when God told Samuel, perhaps in a vision, to fill a horn with oil and go to Bethlehem, there to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the next king. Jesse had eight sons, and he called seven of them and bade them walk slowly, one at a time, past the prophet. God sees not as man sees; for man looks upon the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart. "God hath not chosen these. Are all thy children here?" Samuel asked. "There remains yet David; but he is my youngest son, and is watching the sheep," the father replied. "Send and fetch him," was Samuel's command. Samuel looked at David's open countenance when at last he came, and God said, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." From that day the Spirit of God was in David, and he soon went to live with Samuel at Ramah, to learn the things the aged prophet thought he ought to know, although he would not be a king for many years to come.

When Samuel died at a good old age and was buried at Ramah, all Israel mourned for their great leader and prophet.—Adapted from One Hundred Bible Stories, by Robert Bird.

A REVIEW FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

A Boy who Became a Great Man. What was Samuel's *start* in life? Who were his parents? Poor but godly people: his mother was a saint. Where did he live? In the tabernacle. Who was his guardian and schoolmaster? A priest and judge. The boy Samuel had no money, but he had religion. That is a promising start. Such a boy ought to make something of his life, become a power in the world. Many of our leading men have begun life under such circumstances. Where did President Wilson start? Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Britain, was a poor Welsh boy. What great names can you mention of people who started life with Samuel's capital?

What was Samuel's *success?* What did that obscure boy become? It reads like a romance. He became a priest, a prophet, a judge who ruled the people, and a king-maker, a man who made and dethroned kings. What did he do? He saved the nation from its enemies, turned it into a kingdom, brought the people back to God, making God's name honored and loved among them. He won for himself the trust and affection of the people and a fame which has endured to this day. Few men have had greater success.

Are such chances open to us? Can the poor become great, the obscure become famous, the powerless become the greatest power in the land? It was said of the great Napoleon's armies that every man in the ranks carried a marshall's baton in his knapsack. And every boy and girl has great possibilities before him or her today. What an inspiration to the ambitious is this fact!

What was Samuel's *secret?* He was a man of one purpose. That purpose was not to become famous. His mother had dedicated him to God, and when he was old enough and knew enough he did this also. His purpose was to serve God with all his heart. It was this which saved him from the bad influence of Eli's sons, which saved him from the temptations which power and success brought. It was this which impressed the people and won him their homage and support. He became what he was and did what he did because he sought not his own interests but God's will.

People who do not know what they want to be or do drift along and waste their powers. It is those who set a mark or prize before them and go for it who do things. The river that breaks up into little streams simply creates a swamp. It is the river that pours all its waters into one channel and one direction that carries lumber and ships. And it is those who put all their gifts and strength into one purpose who help the world and help themselves. And the nobler, holier the purpose, the better. Jesus said, Seek ye first God's kingdom and his righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you. Samuel found this true.

A REVIEW FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Samuel's Service to his People. "Samuel is one of the strong men in Israelitish history, one of the great Biblical characters who have left their mark deeply engraven on the development of Israel's religion. As a natural leader he ranks next in importance to Moses himself.

"The vigor and wisdom of his administration as judge, the calm dignity with which he yields to the demands of the people and bows to what he perceives to have the sanction of the Divine Will, the energy with which he throws himself into the new system of government, opposed as that system is to his instinctive feeling that God, and not a man, should be recognized by the people as their King; the warmth of his affection for the young monarch who has supplanted him in the popular favor, the depth of his sorrow for the repeated failure of the chosen one whom he had placed upon the throne, the reluctance with which he regards the breach with Saul as final, and seals his rejection by anointing a successor—all combine to make up a portrait of no ordinary attractiveness, in which the elements of strength and sweetness are finely blended together.

"The whole of his life is laid open before us, from the time that he was a little child ministering before the Lord, till he began to grow up in favor with God and man, and right down to his honored old age, from which he could look back upon a career unselfishly spent in the nation's interest. No stain tarnishes the record of his best services. He walked in his integrity fearing God, but no man's face. He could challenge the people who rejected him to say whether in all his long life he had wronged any one of them. He is one of the Bible's statesmen, but unlike those statesmen who, driven from power, spend the remainder of their days in brooding over their wrongs, he helped to start the State upon its new path. His services were always at his country's disposal.

"His life is a model to all who are intrusted with authority. It serves to teach us that religion is at the root of honor, and piety the only true foundation of patriotism."

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Juniors. 1. What woman was a judge in Israel, and what did she do? 2. By what means was a great army reduced, and why? 3. What wonderful experience did Samuel have as a boy in the tabernacle? 4. What did he do when a man? 5. Who was the first king of Israel? 6. Who disobeyed God's will, and what was his punishment? 7. Who showed himself very brave? 8. What did David do when a youth? 9. What great experience came to him? 10. Where in the Bible is a story told about a boy who heard a call at night and learned what God's will was? 11. A girl who left her own home to go to a strange land with an older woman whom she loved? 12. A woman who saved her people from an enemy? 13. A man who believed that God could save by many or by few? 14. The anointing of the first king of Israel? 15. The anointing of the second king of Israel?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Which judge did the most for Israel, and why do you think so? 2. What lesson regarding the treatment of the aged or lonely have we had? 3. How did Saul fail as King? 4. What single choice was followed by far-reaching consequences? 5. Repeat the twenty-third Psalm. 6. Repeat Ruth's words to Naomi. 7. How did Samuel show his unselfishness? 8. Tell about Gideon's army. 9. To which of the Bible characters of this Quarter's lessons is the genealogy of Jesus traced? 10. How did Jonathan defeat the Philistines?

For Young People and Adults. 1. For what is each of these judges especially remarkable: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson? 2. What qualities in Deborah were admirable? 3. What qualities in Gideon were admirable? 4. Who was the last judge and the first prophet, and how does he rank among the great men of the Bible? 5. What lesson shows the power of home ties? 6. What lesson shows the culpability of easy-going parents? 7. How do you explain the command given Saul as to the Amalekites? 8. How was the boy Samuel made aware of God's will? 9. What qualifications have been shown necessary for leadership? 10. Explain Psalm 23.

A REVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

The Book of Judges. 1. What is the relation of the Book of Judges to the Book of Joshua? 2. What is the period covered by Judges? 3. What was the condition of the people in the time of Judges? 4. Who was the author of the book? 5. When was it written? 6. What are the three main divisions of the

book? 7. Who were the leading judges? 8. What is the value of the book as literature? 9. What is the oldest bit of Hebrew poetry extant? 10. What lessons has the book for us?

The Book of Ruth. 1. What is the relation of the Book of Ruth to the Book of Judges? 2. What phase of life does the book picture? 3. What customs of those early times does it portray? 4. Briefly, what is the story? 5. What are the three main divisions of the book? 6. Who wrote it and when? 7. How does it rank as literature? 8. What are its lessons for us?

The Book of First Samuel. 1. What is the relation of this book to Judges? 2. Why do we have two Books of Samuel? 3. What do the books themselves tell us as to the writers? 4. What purpose had the writers in recording this history? 5. When were they written? 6. Who are the heroes of First Samuel?

FOR WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

For Juniors.

1. The Story of Ruth.
2. The Story of a Battle with Lights and Pitchers.
3. The Story of a Great Leader Praying.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. A Man who Missed his Chance.
2. Gideon and his Three Hundred.
3. An Appreciation of Ruth.
4. An Appreciation of Samuel.
5. An Account of the Battle of the Kishon, as Told by an Officer under Sisera.

For Young People and Adults.

1. The Religion of Israel during the Period of the Judges.
2. An Ideal Friendship.
3. Eli as a Terrible Example to all Easy-going Parents.
4. Samuel as a Champion of National Solidarity.
5. The Twenty-third Psalm.
6. The Religious Value of the Book of Judges.
7. The Beauty of the Book of Ruth.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Juniors. 1. What was the name of the Philistine whom David conquered? 2. Why did the Philistine look upon David with contempt? 3. What answer did David make? 5. How did David slay him? 6. Why was Saul afterwards jealous of David? 7. How did David behave?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Who are the chief characters in the Books of Samuel? 2. Read the entire lesson. 3. How tall was Goliath? 4. What adventure had David had with a lion? 5. Describe David's sling. 6. Why did David aim at Goliath's forehead? 7. Why are David's words not mere bravado? 8. What reasons had David for not being afraid of Goliath? 9. How does Prov. 16.18 apply to Goliath? 10. What words of the forty-fourth Psalm befit David's words to Goliath? 11. Against what enemies must a Christian fight? 12. What should be his armor?

For Young People and Adults. 1. What great personalities appear in the Books of Samuel? 2. Read the entire lesson. 3. Why do orientals regard the calling of another a dog as the strongest expression of contempt? 4. What does Paul say in Rom. 8.31 about seemingly unequal combats? 5. What qualities does David show in this story? 6. What does *Saul eyed David* mean? 7. How does Saul show that he is unfit to be a king? 8. What did David do with Goliath's sword, and under what circumstances did he later use it? (1 S. 21.8-10.) 9. In what sense was David's bearing after the victory a greater test of his character than his combat with the giant? 10. What modern Goliaths must we overcome?

THIRD QUARTER

EARLY LEADERS AND KINGS OF ISRAEL

LESSON I—JULY 4

DAVID IN CAMP AND COURT

Golden Text

**David behaved himself wisely in all his ways;
and Jehovah was with him. 1 Samuel 18.14**

LESSON 1 Samuel 17.1 to 18.9 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 27.1-6

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 19.1-17

1 SAMUEL 17.40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. 43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. 45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day unto the birds of the heavens, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hand. 48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

18.5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

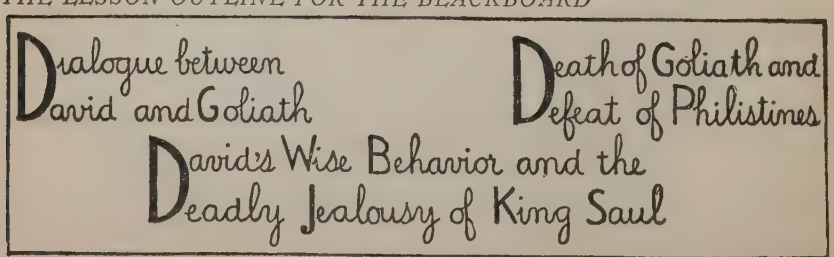
6 And it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with instruments of music. 7 And the women sang one to another as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? 9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


Dialogue between David and Goliath
Death of Goliath and Defeat of Philistines
David's Wise Behavior and the Deadly Jealousy of King Saul

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I. THE PHILISTINE PERIL AND GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE, 17.1-11.

II. DAVID VISITS THE CAMP, HEARS THE CHALLENGE, AND WINS SAUL'S PERMISSION TO ACCEPT IT, 17.12-37.

III. DAVID'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMBAT, 17.38-40. David is called a stripling in verse 56, but he must have been a full grown man, about twenty years old it is believed, or he could not have put Saul's armor on at all. Saul was exceptionally tall, however, and his armor was too heavy for David; but David *assayed to go,* tried to walk, and could not, then David *put them off him.* "He desired to go forth to the battle in the lightest possible armor; strong in the Lord, not in himself; armed not with steel but with faith" (Augustine). *He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook,* which was doubtless dry at this time, *and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet.* Wallet was the name for the shepherd's bag: it was made of a whole skin of a kid, and was slung over the shoulder or hung at the side. *And his sling was in his hand.* The Israelites were not skilled in the use of swords (See 1 S. 13.19-23), but they were very skilful in the use of slings and of bows and arrows.

IV. THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN DAVID AND GOLIATH, 17.41-47. *The Philistine came on*—a stalking mountain overlaid with brass and iron, Matthew Henry calls him. *Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?* the Philistine asked. Staves were used against beasts, not men, and to call another a dog was the strongest term of contempt that could be used. *And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.* "Made use of the name of Jehovah in his cursing, and thus defied not David only, but the God of Israel also." *And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of heaven.* See ¶ 4, p. 262.

David's reply begins with an allusion to the Philistine's superiority in arms, as compared with the club (staff) to which he has made scornful allusion. Yet as contrasted with the sword and spear and javelin, David feels himself armed with the name of the Lord of Hosts, "the God of the ranks of Israel which thou hast insulted this day." "David's confidence overtops that of the Philistine. The boast of the giant is thrown back at him. The result: all the earth shall know that Israel has a God—something of which the heathen are not yet convinced" (Smith). *The battle is Jehovah's.* See Zech. 4.6. "Never Puritan went into battle with a loftier inspiration. It was a touch of the same spirit that Cromwell caught when he chose 'the Lord of Hosts' for his battle cry at Dunbar, and greeted the rout of his foe with the words of the Psalm, 'Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered'" (Geikie).

V. DAVID'S VICTORY AND THE DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINE ARMY, 17.48-54. When the two came near enough together, David *slang* (hurled) his stone, *and smote the Philistine in his forehead.* The forehead was the only part of the giant unprotected. When engaged in warfare, it would be protected by the shield. Judges 20.16 tells us that the Benjamites, seven hundred men, could sling a stone at a hair-breadth and not miss their aim. With what force the stone was hurled is seen in the statement that it sank into the forehead. We are told that slingers from the Balearic Islands could pierce shields and helmets with stones. The stone only stunned the giant; David finished his work with Goliath's sword.

VI. DAVID'S GOOD BEHAVIOR AND SAUL'S EVIL BEHAVIOR, 18.5-9. *And David behaved himself wisely.* "The hour of victory is a more severe moral test than the hour of defeat. To test the real quality of a man, let us regard him just when he has slain Goliath! David behaved himself wisely! He was not 'eaten up with pride.' He went among his friends as though no Goliath had ever crossed his way. He was not for ever recounting the triumph, and fishing for the compliments of his audience. So many of us tarnish our victories by the manner in which we display them" (Jowett).

The women who welcomed David back from his victory, *sang one to another,* that is, they sang in two choruses, and sang alternately, as did Miriam and the women after the crossing of the Red Sea. *Saul was very wroth, and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: what can he have more but the kingdom?* Perhaps he was recalling Samuel's words, 1 S. 15.28. *And Saul eyed David,* looked at him jealously, suspiciously, *from that day forward.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His sling was in his hand, verse 40. The sling was made of leather, or of plaited work of wool, rushes, hair, or sinews. The middle part, where the stone lay, was called the cup, for the sling gradually narrowed toward the extremities, so that it could be easily handled. In the Egyptian sling, which probably was the same as the Hebrew, there was a loop at one end which was placed over the thumb, in order to retain the weapon when the stone was hurled and the other end became free. The sling was used by the shepherds to keep the beasts of prey from the flock, and also to keep the sheep from straying. In war it was the favorite weapon in skillful hands. In using the sling, the stone was put into the broad, hollowed part, the ends were grasped together in the hands, and after a few whirls around the head to give impetus, the stone was discharged, frequently with force enough to penetrate the helmet or shield.—Freeman, Handbook.

The Earliest Representation of David
From The Roman Catacombs

Playing with slings and stones is a favorite pastime for boys in Palestine today. A traveler noticed that several boys had severe burns on their wrists, and inquiring the cause was told that these burns were self-inflicted because the boys had a superstitious notion that burning the wrist would give them skill in throwing accurately!

Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves? verse 43. The Eastern dog is the public scavenger; he is dirty, and repulsive, owns no master but roams freely about the streets, and is kicked about and is treated as a nuisance. The staff which the shepherd carries he uses for a support in climbing hills, for driving the sheep out from the low bushes where they stray, and also for keeping the shepherd dogs in subjection. It is to this last use that Goliath refers. A further explanation of his words is given by Roberts in his Oriental Illustrations: Men of high caste will not strike those of low caste with the hand, because the touch would defile them; they therefore beat them with a stick or other weapon. To offer to strike any person with a stick, then, is very provoking, and the person so struck will ask, "Am I a dog?"

I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field, verse 44. By the Jews and by all oriental people not to be buried after death was considered one of the greatest dishonors that could befall one. In Deuteronomy 28.26 it is said that one of the fearful consequences of disobedience to God's law, will be that "Thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away." When the seven sons of Saul were hung by the Gibeonites, Rizpah, the mother of two of them, remained by the bodies "from the beginning of harvest till water was poured upon them from heaven," and "suffered neither the birds of the heavens to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

It is said that the threat of Goliath is still in Palestine a favorite way of terrifying an enemy. "Begone, or I will give thy flesh to the jackals." "The crows shall have thy carcass." "Yes, the teeth of the dog shall soon have hold of thee." "The eagles are ready."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How did a Philistine garrison mock two Israelites who came to face them? How did Gideon show great bravery? How did Ruth? The boy Samuel? Saul? Jonathan? How is David described when Samuel first saw him? What was David's occupation? What did Samuel do to him? What are the words in which Gideon ascribed his victory to Jehovah? When has Saul ascribed to God his victory? Give Jonathan's words at Michmash in which he speaks of Jehovah as working for them.

Israelites and Philistines Meet for Battle; Goliath's Challenge. Again

we hear of Israel being engaged in warfare with the Philistines. On opposite heights of the valley of Elah, the two armies were encamped. For forty days, every morning and every evening, a Philistine giant named Goliath had stood forth and challenged the Israelites to settle the matter by a single combat, saying: "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." And this was to be the result of the combat: "If he is able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us." Saul and all Israel were dismayed. When the Israelites saw Goliath approaching they fled.

Location of the Two Camps

The Two Accounts of David's Introduction to Saul's Court. David's three oldest brothers had joined Saul's army, and their father sent David to them with a large quantity of parched grain, bread and cheese. On hearing about the giant's challenge, David asked, "Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" His brother Eliab heard David talking with the warriors and spoke angrily and scornfully to him, reminding him that for all his pride he was but a shepherd. David continued to talk with the men, and his willingness to fight with the giant was reported to the King. Saul sent for David. When Saul saw David, he told him that he could not fight the giant, "for thou art but a youth and he a man of war from his youth." David then told Saul how he had slain a lion and a bear, and explained his confident trust in God, that as he had delivered him from these ferocious animals, so he would now save him from the Philistine. Saul then consented to risk the combat. The result is the subject of our lesson.

To Saul David was an unknown youth, for as David went forth to the combat Saul inquired of Abner, the captain, who the youth was, and Abner could not tell him. When David returned from his victory, Abner brought him to the King. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

Yet according to 16.14-32, David had been Saul's musician and armorbearer. After the account of David's anointing by Samuel to be Saul's successor, we are told that at times Saul was subject to extreme depression, perhaps to insanity. His officers suggested that music would bring relief, and recommended David to him as "skilful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a comely person." David was sent for, and his playing on his harp had the desired effect on Saul. Saul loved him and made him his armorbearer.

Evidently we have here two accounts of the way in which David came to be a member of Saul's court. Josephus would reconcile the two by understanding that several years passed between David's life at court as Saul's musician and his appearance in camp ready to fight Goliath, and therefore the King failed to recognize him. Verse 15, which says that "David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep in Bethlehem," seeks to reconcile the two, yet David is represented as an older man when he came to Saul as a musician than when he fought the Philistine. In the Septuagint, the oldest Greek Version of the Bible, thirty verses are lacking from the 17th chapter. Were they omitted because they do not harmonize with the earlier accounts? See p. 29 of our Introduction.

The Two Goliaths. In 2 Sam. 21.19 we read that "Elhanan slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam." Was there another giant by the same name? David's Philistine champion is nameless save in verses 4 and 23. Has the name of Elhanan's adversary been transferred to David's, and is 1 Ch. 20.5 a later chronicler's harmonization of the two statements in Samuel?

After the Victory over Goliath. When the Philistines saw their champion fall they fled in terror toward Gath and Ekron, with the Israelites shouting jubilantly in hot pursuit. The Israelites slew them, and then returned to plunder the Philistine camp.

Meanwhile David brought the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, and put away

the giant's sword as a trophy in the Sanctuary of Nob. In those days it was customary to hang up in the sacred buildings the swords or shields taken from an enemy, just as it has been customary in Europe today to erect a monument out of the cannon taken from an enemy in some great battle. Some time afterwards David was forced to flee from Saul, who was seeking his life. He had no weapon, and he went to Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, and asked for one. The aged priest replied that the only weapon he could give him was Goliath's sword. "There is none like that, give it to me," joyfully exclaimed David, and this sword, which he had so bravely won, encouraged as well as aided him in defending himself from his enemies.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

About twelve miles west of Bethlehem two wadies, or river-beds, meet, the first starting in the neighborhood of Bethlehem, the other in the neighborhood of Hebron. The united torrents that rush along these wadies in winter have made a deep ravine through the winding valley of Elah, which breaks through the mountains of Judah and then crosses the Low Hills to the Plain.

The Philistines, you remember, dwelt upon the Maritime Plain and the Israelites in the Hill-country. The Philistines drove their war-chariots up the Vale of Elah, till they reached the Plain of Shocoh, which is hemmed in on all sides by hills. Hidden among the bushes upon a hill overlooking this three-cornered plain were the Israelites. Leaving their war-chariots on the plain, the Philistines encamped on the hill opposite the Israelites. The Philistines could not attack the Israelites without descending their hill, crossing the plain and the brook, and ascending the hill of the Israelites. Meantime the Israelites could hurl down upon them darts and arrows. The Philistines were evidently determined to draw the Israelites down to the plain for battle. They did not expect that any Israelite would be rash enough to risk an encounter with their giant; rather must they have expected the Israelites to become so exasperated by his taunts that they would rush down upon the plain in a body, then the Philistines could quickly outfight them.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In this story, we see Saul putting the armor of a man, an unusually large man, too, upon a stripling. Are you, perhaps, making a similar mistake in trying to arm your pupils for the moral battles of life? Do you expect from a child, or an adult who is still spiritually a child, the same type of religion that is yours in your maturity and spiritual growth? Youth has its own religious experience—manhood has another—old age yet another.

A Sunday-school teacher once read to me a letter from a twelve-year-old pupil. It was full of that teacher's own expressions, vague generalizations about delighting to work in the Master's Vineyard, desiring to extend the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and so on. "Is it not a wonderful letter for a child to write?" proudly asked the teacher. It certainly was an unnatural letter. The child was clad in the teacher's armor.

How about the religious convictions which you are teaching—are they your own, or another's? Are you speaking of what you do know and testifying to what you have experienced, or are you but echoing the thoughts and beliefs of others? If you have proved the religious convictions of others, then they befit you. If you have not, can you work effectively with them?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A SHEPHERD BOY CONQUERS A GIANT

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. On a farm over in Romsey, South Africa, there was a herd boy in charge of one hundred and eight head of cattle. One day, says a news item in the Rhodesia Herald, the boy was standing on an ant heap, examining a pair of boots he had bought the day before, when he heard a low growl. Looking up, he saw three lions had attacked three cows, while another lion stood looking on.

The boy pulled off his boots and threw them at the nearest lion, and then made a rush for them with a stick, shouting at the same time at the top of his voice to another herd boy to bring a gun.

In the meantime two lions had got their cows down, but, nothing daunted, the Kafir made a rush for them, and the lions moved away from their prey. The boy then rounded up his cattle, and while he was doing so had to chase the lions away several times; when he was at one side, the lions would try to catch the cattle on the other. However, he brought all his cattle safely home. Since then one of the cows has died, the claw of a lion having penetrated her lung.

For cool daring, it would be hard to beat the chasing of four lions single-handed, and with no weapon except a pair of boots and a stick. Perhaps this deed was only beaten by David's daring in the long ago. What was his remarkable deed?

The Shepherd Boy Conquers a Giant. Yes, he conquered him and in the sight of two armies. You all know how he did it with his sling and his stone. It was a great victory—unexpected, quick, complete, and splendid in its results.

The contrasts in the story are many and great. Look at the two champions; one a giant, the other a stripling; one skilled in war weapons, the other only a keeper of sheep. Look at their equipment; one with armor and sword and an armorbearer; the other without armor, with only a sling and stone, and all alone. Look at their attitude: one depending on his own strength and skill; the other confident in his God, in the fact that this was God's fight and that he would help him win.

What does the story teach us? That *there is a weak spot in every evil.* Goliath was wonderfully clad. From shoulder to toe he was a figure of flashing armor. In his hand he gripped a mighty spear and by his side swung a giant sword. What chance had any man of dealing him a death blow? But his forehead was exposed. If he wore a helmet it did not come far enough over his face. The space between his eyes was open to arrow and spear and stone. And this is true of every gigantic thing. There is a place in every dreadnought where the armor is thin and it can be pierced. And it is true of the biggest, most gigantic evil that ever kept the world cowed. It is not the strong and mighty thing it seems. You have only to touch it on the right spot and it crumples up.

That *there is a weapon for every evil.* What can destroy Goliath? The onlookers thought it could not be done by battle ax, spear, or sword. Nobody thought of pebbles from a brook till one of those pebbles in the right hand did it. Great wrongs and evils often seem unbreakable. Ordinary weapons seem useless against them. But there is always a weapon somewhere that can beat them. If it can't be done by force, it may be done by thought.

That *there is a victor for every evil.* Day after day Goliath came forth and sounded his challenge. For forty days it went on and nobody was found with the courage to answer it. But when every heart in Israel was despairing God's champion was revealed, and on the forty-first day before sundown Goliath was dead and the Philistine army in flight. Some evils have gone on for forty years and many for centuries. It looked as if they would go on for ever. But in God's good time the giant slayer has always appeared and the evil has been swept away. We look on the world today and see many a wrong. Men and governments have tried to put them down and failed. But somewhere even now God is shaping, inspiring the man who will worst them. We never need be in despair over the giants. If evil has its champions, God has his who will bring about the evil champion's downfall.

Who is Your Goliath? What Goliath have you to fight with? You have one. I might say, perhaps, your giant is a bad temper; you are often angry, you do not speak the truth, you are prone to lying; I might say it is idleness, or irreverence; but I do say your giant is *self.* All the Goliaths in the world would be unable to destroy you if there were not a traitor inside to open the gate and let the enemy in. Self is your giant.—James Vaughn.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 17.45.

More dear in the sight of God and his angels than any other conquest is the conquest of self.—Dean Stanley.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When did David and Jonathan become friends? (1 S. 18.1-3.) 2. What aroused Saul's jealousy of David, as we learned in our last lesson? 3. Tell the plan which David made with Jonathan in order to learn how Saul felt toward

him. (1 S. 20.1-7, 17-23.) 4. How did Saul tell Jonathan that it was best for him to let David be killed? (1 S. 20.31.) 5. What answer did Jonathan make? (Verse 32.) 6. What did Jonathan's words in verse 38 tell David? 7. Why did David and Jonathan weep at parting? 8. How did Jonathan prove his friendship for David? 9. Have you good friends? 10. How do you prove your friendship for them?

Note-Book Work. XII. The Lesson Title; your opinion of Goliath; your opinion of David; how David overcame Goliath; to whom David ascribed the victory; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: FIGHTING A GOOD FIGHT

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There is a district in Kashmir today whose inhabitants are nearly all of them giants. They range from seven to nearly nine feet in height. Here is a picture of one of them standing beside a man of ordinary height. Notice the size of the giants hands and feet. These giants of Kashmir, despite their imposing appearance, are not strong, and it is said that a small, plucky Englishman can easily overpower one of them. Once a regiment was formed of these giants, and a small wiry Bengal lancer proved a match for several of them at once.

A Giant of Kashmir

We hear today about a Philistine giant, whom an Israelite stripling vanquished in single combat. What was the giant's name? How tall was he? How many feet are there in six cubits and a span? The cubit was originally the measure of the forearm, but the length of the forearm varied in different men, of course, and we are not certain just what was the average length, nor, indeed, whether the measurement was from the elbow to the wrist only, or from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. The Egyptian cubit measured seventeen and two-thirds inches, about a foot and a half, and probably this was the measure of the Hebrew cubit. Goliath, then, was nine feet and nine inches in height, only a little taller than the giants of Kashmir today.

Goliath must have been very strong as well as tall, for his coat of mail weighed about a hundred and fifty pounds. What else did he wear in the way of armor? He has been called "a stalking mountain overlaid with brass and iron." What challenge did he make to the Israelites? What effect did it have upon the Israelites? Who offered to fight him? How did Saul try to arm David for the combat? Why did David reject his armor? What did he choose for a weapon?

Celebrating the Victory. It was a memorable day when we read the story of the personal combat between David and Goliath. No record of pugilistic encounter in the "ring" was ever received with more enthusiasm by lovers of the so-called manly art than was this narrative by my Benny. He laughed aloud; he shouted words of encouragement to the shepherd lad and hurled jeers and scoffs at the bragging giant. In vain I tried to subdue this uproarious appreciation of sacred history. He waived me aside, respectfully, but with firmness, crying eagerly, "Oh, I just can't help it; please let me go on, ma'am. I must see which whips; 'most know that boy does." When Goliath utters his scornful boast, "Come to me and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air," Benny sniffed contemptuously and muttered, "We'll see about that, sir. Mebbe them fowls will have somebody else to eat before long." But when he read David's response, with its modest confidence in God's ability to make him conqueror, a serious smile lighted up the dark face. "That's the talk," he said. "David couldn't do it all hisself and he knows it. But God can do just anything and he'll help him beat, you see if he don't." We all know that he did give the lad a glorious victory, though few of us remember when the knowledge first came

to us. But I shall never forget Benny's extravagant delight over the result, or the peculiar way in which he celebrated the victory. That evening at dinner as he waited at the table there was a suppressed excitement apparent in his manner, a sort of restless impatience at any delay or lingering over the meal, not usual in the youth. This was explained when, with the dessert, our waiter proudly brought in a loaf of frosted cake, garnished with flowers and having a small American flag in the center. At our exclamation of surprise Benny chuckled and said, "That's on 'count of the great vict'ry,—David's, you know. We wasn't any of us there to celebrate at the time and I reckoned we'd ought to take some notice of it now."—Annie Trumbull Slosson, in A Simple Expositor, Sunday-School Times.

This Young Champion of the Lord Had Won Many Victories before He Faced Goliath. Everything depends upon how I approach my supreme conflicts. If I come wearing the garlands of triumph won in the shade, the shout of victory is already in the air! Let me look at David's trophies before he removed Goliath's head.

He had conquered his *temper*. Read Eliab's irritating taunt in the twenty-eighth verse, and mark the fine self-possession of the young champion's reply! That conquest of temper helped him when he took aim at Goliath! There is nothing like passion for disturbing the accuracy of the eye and the steadiness of the hand.

He had conquered *fear*. "Let no man's heart fail because of him," he said. There was no panic, no feverish and wasteful excitement. There was no shouting "to keep the spirits up." He was perfectly calm.

And he had conquered *unbelief*. He had a rich history of the providential dealings of God with him, and his confidence was now unclouded and serene. He had known the Lord's power when he faced the bear and the lion. Now for Goliath!—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Let us Fight the Good Fight. Each one of us has his own giants which he should face. John Bunyan has mentioned some of them—Giant Pride, Giant Grim, Giant Pagan. What are your giants? Are they perhaps Giant Anger, Giant Untruthfulness, Giant Selfishness, Giant Sullenness? You know that it is said of Jesus as a lad that he "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Now the Greek word which is translated "increased" means literally "cut his way forward." If you would be worthy of God's favor and man's, you must bravely cut your way forward against all the evil giants that beset your pathway. You must engage in single combat with each giant alone, and yet on your side fights the Great Helper who was with David. As you wrestle with each one, say with Whittier:

> "So let it be. In God's own might
> I gird me for the coming fight,"

then you will be armed, not alone with pebbles of determination and courage, but with the sling of sublime confidence in God.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The man who calmly expects to win has already begun to conquer: our mood has so much to do with our might.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The clear conscience and the heart of faith will bring any man off from any field where he may be sent more than conqueror through him who loves us.—Dean Charles Reynolds Brown.

Self-conquest is the greatest of victories.—Plato.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Into what four main divisions do the Books of Samuel fall? 2. What is said in 1 S. 18.1-4 about the beginning of the friendship between David and Jonathan? 3. Why did Saul hate David? 4. Why did Jonathan love David? 5. How did Saul persecute David? 6. What signs had the two friends arranged between them? (verses 18-22.) 7. What reason might Jonathan have had for being unfriendly to David? (1 S. 20.31). 8. What proves Jonathan's love for David? 9. What friends are worth while? 10. Does it make any difference what kind of chums you have? 11. Who is the best friend of everyone? 12. Who did Jesus say were his friends? (Jn. 15.14.)

Note-Book Work. Part III, David the Champion.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: OVERTHROWING MODERN GOLIATHS Or, COMBATTING GIANT EVILS

Additional Material: Ephesians 6.10-20.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Describe the circumstances under which Goliath challenged the Israelites to a single combat. How was he arrayed for the fray? How did David happen to offer himself, and how did Saul try to dissuade him? How did David succeed in gaining the king's consent? Was David wise in rejecting the king's armor? Describe the scene as David faced Goliath. Tell the dialogue that ensued.

Such a conversation as this between combatants seems to us ridiculous; but every one who is familiar with Homer's Iliad (as W. M. Taylor reminds us) will see a wonderful similarity between the speeches of Goliath and David and those which the father of poetry puts into the mouths of his heroes in similar circumstances.

Goliath: Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. *Glaucus:* Come hither, that you may quickly reach the goal of death. *Hector:* Thy flesh shall glut the dogs and carrion birds of Troy.

Goliath versus God! Goliath seemed to have everything on his side *except* God. And the things in which he boasted were just the things in which men are prone to boast today.

He had physical strength. "His height was six cubits and a span." Athletics had done all they could for him, and he was a fine type of animal perfection.

He had splendid military equipment. "A helmet of brass," and "a coat of mail," and "a spear like a weaver's beam"! Surely, if fine material equipment determines combats, the shepherd-lad from the hills of Bethlehem will be annihilated.

And he enjoyed the enthusiastic confidence of the Philistines. He was his nation's pride and glory! He strode out amid their shouts, and the cheers were like iron in his blood.

But all this counted for nothing, because God was against him. Men and nations may attain to a fine animalism, their warlike equipment may satisfy the most exacting standard, and yet, with God against them, they shall be as structures woven out of mists, and they shall collapse at the touch of apparent weakness. The issue was not Goliath versus David, but Goliath versus God!—Dr. Jowett.

The Creation of Opportunity. The first thing that strikes one in this familiar story is that young David creates his own opportunity. He uses the weapon which is familiar to his hand, and what other men would have thrown away as useless in battle becomes sufficient for his need. The smooth stones serve his purpose. He sees his own gifts and makes the most of what he has. A great many people are ready to fight if only they had Saul's armor instead of their own sling. What they ask of life is another man's opportunity. Thousands of men in the business world thus waste their years in waiting for a large place instead of utilizing the one they have, and creating their place with their own weapons. It is the same with the experience of life. Every man feels himself ill-equipped. He looks at the task to be done and seems to be meeting a giant with a sling. Young David, however, creates his own opportunity. Here is the secret of efficiency—the discerning of a chance where others would despair, the utilizing of weapons which others would throw away. One of our own poets has told the story in the parable of the king's son:

"Then I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream,
There spread a cloud of dust along the plain,
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and sword
Clashed upon sword and shield. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge
And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener steel,
That blue blade that the king's son bears—but this
Blunt thing!' He snapt and flung it from his hand,
And cowering crept away and left the field.

Then came the king's son, wounded, sore instead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemies down
And saved a great cause that heroic day."

—Professor Francis G. Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

Modern Goliaths. The sword of Mohammed and the Koran are the most stubborn enemies of civilization, liberty, and truth which the world has yet known. While other religions and systems of error have fallen before the advance of truth, as Dagon before the ark of Jehovah, Islam, like mighty Goliath, defies the armies of the living God and the progress of Christ's kingdom. At a very conservative estimate there are two hundred million Mohammedans—one-seventh of the human race! It is a world problem. One great task to which Christ summons his Church is the evangelization of the Mohammedan world.—Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer.

A British View of Our 1918 Celebration of Victory. America never knew such a Fourth of July celebration as that of last Thursday. Nor has Britain ever appreciated the great American anniversary before. For one thing, the average Briton had nothing but the vaguest idea of what the "Fourth" means, and those who did know had no great reason for exuberation. But at a stroke all this has been changed. July 4, 1918, will pass down to history, not as a celebration, but as the sealing of a solemn compact between two great peoples to secure for the entire world that true independence of all nations which is irrevocably linked with their interdependence. There was something deeply religious about the day's proceedings, which even our chief enemy cannot fail to observe and reflect upon. The insane boastfulness of Germany has received a severe check in the fact that more than a million of Americans have been transported to France, with the small loss of only 291 men by enemy action. And when it is remembered why they have come, the marvel is increased. The War is now narrowed down to one issue, the world's independence and interdependence, or slavery and tyranny. The Allies stand for the one: Germany for the other.—The Christian.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The literary charm of the stories about David's youth and their religious teachings.

2. David could not fight in Saul's armor. Each man's method must be his own. "Mr. Sunday," for example, "must be allowed to work in his own armor. Splendid the success that he is having. But he is not to be imitated by any man. His peculiarities of speech or of method, his unconventional use of language, and his pulpit demonstrations—these are his own. To imitate them is to become ridiculous and to harm the work. See chapter XVIII of The Hope of the Gospel, by J. D. Jones.

3. The secret of efficiency—the discerning of a chance where others would despair, the utilizing of weapons which others would throw away.—Dr. Peabody.

4. There are sentiments and principles which become deep-rooted in a nation's life mightier by far than the heaviest battalions. There are habits of thought and long-cherished convictions which constitute a more reliable form of defense than all the ramparts and battlements devised by strategists. A nation of Davids will in the final outcome outmatch any nation of Goliaths with all their swords and spears.—Dean Charles Reynolds Brown.

5. Independence Day. What are you doing for your country?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are the four chief divisions of the Books of Samuel? 2. What must David have admired in Jonathan? 3. What must Jonathan have admired in David? 4. How did Saul try to turn Jonathan against David, and what effect did he have? 5. Was it to Jonathan's interest to befriend David? 6. What New Testament hero was willing, like Jonathan, to give the first place to another? (John the Baptist.) 7. What did David say in 2 S. 1.26 about Jonathan's love? 8. Which was the nobler in his friendship, David or Jonathan? 9. In what respects is the friendship of David and Jonathan typical of all true friendship? 10. What do Prov. 18.24; 27.10, 17 say about a friend? 11. What is a friend? 12. How can you win friends? 13. How can you keep them? 14. What is the cost of friendship? 15. What can you tell about the friendship of Washington and Lafayette? 16. Of Damon and Pythias? 17. How does Christ say we can prove our friendship for him? (Jn. 15.14.)

JONATHAN BEFRIENDS DAVID

Golden Text

A friend loveth at all times
And a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17.17

LESSON 1 Samuel 20 DEVOTIONAL READING John 15.9-15

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 18.1-5, 17-30; 19. 1-24

1 SAMUEL 20.32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore should he be put to death? what hath he done? 33 And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to put David to death. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no food the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. 36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? 38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. 39 But the lad knew not anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. 41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. 42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jehovah shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

JONATHAN
Becomes David's Brother
Braves Saul's Anger
Befriends David

I. DAVID DISCLOSES HIS DANGER TO JONATHAN, 1-4.
II. DAVID'S PLAN FOR LEARNING SAUL'S INTENTIONS TOWARD HIM, 5-8.
III. COVENANT BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN, 9-23.
IV. THE EXECUTION AND RESULT OF DAVID'S PLAN, 24-34. Read chapters 18, 19, and 20, and the Historical Background. Saul was beside himself with passion, but to Jonathan, if to any one, his frenzy was amenable. Jonathan tried to calm him with mild words, saying, *Wherefore should he* (David) *be put to death? What hath he done?* These questions aroused Saul's anger to such a pitch that he lost all control of himself and *cast his spear at him to smite him.* Jonathan had been unwilling to admit to himself that *it was determined of his father to put David to death,* but now *he knew.* Further evidence was scarcely needed! So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger.

"His generous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows" (Pope).

Throughout the history we see Jonathan's devotion to his unfortunate father. He held the office afterwards known as that of "the king's friend." "My father doeth nothing either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so," he told David when David assured him that Saul was bent on putting David to death. Here is the only time when there was a break between Jonathan and his father. He afterwards stayed with Saul, shared his lot in war, and "in death they were not divided."

For he was grieved for David because his father had done him shame. Shame had been done to Jonathan by his father's angry, insulting words, verse 30, but this was overlooked; shame had been done to David by Saul's public accusation of treasonable designs, verse 31, and over this and Saul's frenzied desire for David's life, Jonathan grieved.

V. JONATHAN BEFRIENDS DAVID, 35-42. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, as told us in verses 18-23, *and a little lad with him,* young enough not to suspect Jonathan's plan. Jonathan shot one or more arrows (verse 20) and sent the lad to get them. While the boy was running after them, Jonathan shot an arrow that flew over his head and fell beyond him (verse 22). *And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not.* These were the words agreed upon (verse 22), they were spoken to the lad, but were intended for David, who was in hiding (verse 24). *And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.* Jonathan gave his weapons—his bow and quiver—*unto his lad and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.* Jonathan was eager to have the lad depart that he himself might freely talk with David.

Out of a place toward the south, from his hiding-place to the south of the stone Ezel, verse 18, David arose, *and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times.* Thus David showed respect to Jonathan as his superior, for Jonathan was the king's son. See Gen. 33.3; 42.6. *And they kissed one another, and wept one with another.* See below. "Friendship's one infallible test is that it draws nearer to its object in the time of trouble" (Fitzgerald).

And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace. This was the customary phrase for farewell. *Forasmuch as we have both sworn in the name of Jehovah* (see verses 12-17, 23), *saying, Jehovah shall be between me and thee,* not to separate, but to draw closer together, *and between my seed and thy seed* (see verse 15): their solemn oath was to be binding upon their posterity. *And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went unto the city.* Only once, and by stealth, 23.16, do we hear of the friends meeting again.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He said unto him, Thou son of a perverse, rebellious woman, verse 30. This is a favorite oriental mode of abuse. There are some traces of this form of abuse, in principle, among the least refined portion of our own population; but in the East no man is too high or too refined to be above it. Even a son will abuse his brother, by casting contumely upon his mother, regardless of the fact that she is also his own mother, and whom, as such, he venerates and loves.—Kitto.

They kissed one another and wept one with another, verse 41. Men in the East are more emotional than Westerners and they do not deem it unmanly to give expression to their emotion. The custom of embracing and kissing among men is not uncommon even in Germany and France today, as well as in the Orient.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What famous friendships formed the subject of a lesson of our First Quarter? What brave deed of Jonathan's have we studied? What brave deed of David's? What kingly qualities have we seen in Saul? Why was Saul jealous of David?

The First Meeting of David and Jonathan. Jonathan was present when Abner brought David, the victorious champion of Israel against Goliath, into the King's presence. At once a beautiful friendship sprang up between the two young men. "Jonathan loved David as his own soul," and in token of his love

gave David his own robe, sword and bow. Thus David's victory over Goliath not only brought about the defeat of the Philistines, but gained for David the friendship of Jonathan and a position at court. His wise course brought him the approval of all the people.

The Reason for Saul's Jealousy of David. If we connect today's lesson directly with the tenth lesson in the last Quarter, we shall understand why Saul looked on David with jealous hatred. Saul had been told by the prophet that his kingdom should be taken from him and given to another better than he, and he looked with suspicious eyes at any one likely to prove this promised successor.

The song of the women after David's victory over the Philistine, which ascribed to Saul his thousands and to David his ten thousands, first aroused the demon of jealousy in Saul's heart. "What can he have more than the kingdom?" he said, and he eyed David from that day forward. Convinced that David was the man who would succeed him, he did not hesitate to attempt to render the prophecy vain by striving to accomplish the death of David. His attempt is the subject of nine chapters of First Samuel.

To remove David from his sight, he made him captain over a thousand men, and when Saul saw that David behaved himself wisely, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David.

After betrothing his older daughter, Merab, to David, Saul gave her in marriage to another. If Saul hoped that David would seek revenge and commit some treasonable act, he was disappointed. Michal, Saul's younger daughter, loved David, and the king agreed that she should become David's wife on condition that, in lieu of the customary dowry due the father of the bride, David should kill a hundred Philistines. Saul hoped that David would perish in the attempt, but David carried out the order. Michal became David's wife, and thus he was raised to a position of prince of the royal family second in rank to that of Jonathan. As David's popularity increased, Saul's jealous hatred knew no bounds. He openly sought David's life.

Two Records. Verses 1-7 of the 19th chapter seem to be an account of the same incident as that which is elaborated in chapter 20, and 19.8-10 a duplicate of 18.10-12. Yet Saul may have made two similar attempts upon David's life, and between the two Jonathan succeeded in effecting a reconciliation, as told in 19.1-7.

David Flees for his Life. An evil spirit was upon Saul as David was playing on his harp before him, and Saul hurled his spear at David. The spear missed its mark, and David escaped to his home. That night his wife Michal let him down through a window and David made his escape to Samuel to Ramah. Samuel dwelt with David at Naioth in Ramah. From there David returned to Gibeah and sought Jonathan.

David's Plan and his Covenant with Jonathan. When David told Jonathan that Saul was seeking his life, Jonathan was unwilling to believe that his father would actually kill David and insisted that his father did nothing without telling him of it. But David replied that the king knew Jonathan loved him, David, and therefore hid his purpose from his son. David appealed to Jonathan to find out Saul's real purpose, and the two decided upon this plan. A dinner was to be given at the palace on the next day, from which David would be absent, and what the king said on noting David's absence would disclose his feelings toward David. Jonathan would come to the field where David would be in hiding and practice with bow and arrows. If Jonathan said to the boy who was to go for the arrows, "The arrows are on this side," David would know that he could return to the palace in safety. But if Jonathan said, "The arrows are beyond thee," David would know that he must flee for his life. At the same time the two friends entered into a covenant of perpetual friendship.

The Tragedy of Saul's Life. It is long since Saul has made any effort to control his anger. When he became convinced that his son was taking David's part, "his anger was kindled," and so fierce was the flame that he reviled Jonathan's mother, his own wife, and tried to kill Jonathan, his own son. Saul's life is a tragedy, the tragedy of a man capable of nobility of character and of great service for his kingdom, giving loose reins to his selfishness and evil temper. When a lion is angry he is sometimes so occupied with the violent manifestations of his anger—shaking his mane and flogging his sides with his tail—that he gives his would-be prey time to make good his escape. So Saul's

loss of self-control and his violent display of anger to his son, allowed David to escape.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"As we think back, it is clear to us that the most fruitful part of our teacher's work was the friendly interest that operated outside the class. The invitation to tea; the book that was lent us; the social hour with the teacher's heart at leisure to speak a word of praise and encouragement; the visit in quietness; the country walks; and the homeward walk in the gloaming, when, perchance, the talk took on an earnest tone, and some quiet appeal was made for surrender to Christ; the discovery that someone was praying for us; the hand grip when first we made the great confession with beating heart; the letter that came to us when away from home; the friendly word that influenced an employer to give us the first chance at work. These and a hundred other unrecorded acts of personal friendship were the things that found us." Are you such a friend to your pupils?

And there is the other side of the shield. Although some pupils never express in words their friendship for their teacher, the teacher can count upon it. There is a world of heartfelt joy and inspiration for renewed efforts for the teacher who wins the friendship of his pupils, for his love is repaid tenfold.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: DAVID AND JONATHAN

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Have you ever heard it said of two boys that they are like David and Jonathan? Why do others say this? When two boys are such great friends that they want to be together all the time and share all their fun together, we call them David and Jonathan. When did real David and Jonathan first meet? They were together at the royal palace for awhile, and then Saul became so jealous of David that he wanted to have him killed, and David had to hide. Why was Saul jealous? How did he treat Jonathan because of his friendship for David? How did Jonathan befriend David?

David and Jonathan. They were chums and more. They were lovers, and their love for each other has been the wonder and at the same time the ideal of the world. A David and Jonathan friendship is about the finest thing the world knows.

There have been strange friendships in the animal world. Cats and dogs, cats and birds, donkeys and horses, have been friends. There have been strange friendships in human life. Millionaires have made friends of their servants. Political opponents have been the best of chums. People who by circumstances, position and opinion seemed bound to be strange to each other, even enemies, have become fast friends; and that was the case with David and Jonathan. They were rivals for a crown. Jonathan was born to it; David had been called to it. They were both popular heroes, because of their military achievements. Their interests were opposed. Their position made them antagonists. Yet they were friends! These things make theirs one of the most unique friendships in history.

Their regard for each other was not just a passing glow, a mere liking, but a real affection. It was *strong.* Saul disliked it, jeered at Jonathan, and was ready to kill him for it. And the fact that Jonathan's father sought his life might well have chilled David's feeling for Jonathan. And no doubt both had companions who in their own interests sought to divide them.

Their affection was *unselfish.* Loving David, Jonathan sought to help him, to save him from Saul's plots and anger. And David on his side swore to be true to Jonathan, and to help all who were dear to him.

It was *changeless and enduring.* Jonathan never altered in his feeling for David, and David's love for Jonathan burned undimmed. When tidings eventually came of Jonathan's death, David's heart was broken. Often separated, with many a cause for suspicion and misunderstanding, their love remained untarnished and unweakened to the end.

What was it that brought about so beautiful a friendship between those two? They were brought into close contact by their duties in the army and at the court, and thus came to know each other well. They were both soldiers, and successful soldiers. They had the same high aims about building up the king-

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dom, making it strong, and defeating its enemies. All these things helped to make them friends. But the real reason is to be found in their own natures. They were very much alike. Both were generous, chivalrous, unselfish. Both were courageous, daring, lovers of adventure. Both were lovers of noble deeds. Men who had so much in common were drawn to each other—it could not be otherwise. It sometimes happens that the capable love the incapable, the strong the weak, the beautiful the plain: these are cases of affection between opposites. But in David and Jonathan's case it is an example of like loving like, of two souls of the same high nobility being drawn into deathless affection for each other.

This friendship influenced their lives, leading Jonathan to surrender his claims to the throne and saving David again and again from death. It developed their characters, bringing out the best in each. It saved them from jealousies and misunderstandings. It helped and cheered them in dark and difficult days. It shows us what a noble friendship can do for anyone.

One who Endured Jeers for her Friend. A party of a hundred children of the slums had been taken for a visit into the country and were on their way home. The attendant heard a chorus of gibes all aimed at Rosie, one of the little girls, and then she saw that the girl was wearing a pair of shoes of very large size. Then the attendant remembered that Rosie had had a pair of new shoes, and she asked what had become of them. "Well," said Rosie, "you see these shoes ain't mine. They're Katie's. I know they're awful big, but her mamma ain't had any work lately, so she couldn't buy her a new pair. She just gave her own shoes to Katie.

"Katie felt awful bad about it, and cried all the way to the station. The girls all laughed at her. So I just lent her my new ones and took hers.

"You see, teacher," said Rosie, raising her eyes to the attendant's face, "Katie's my friend."—New York Tribune.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: 1 John 3.18.

He is very rich who has Jesus for his friend.—Thomas à Kempis.

Those testy souls whom every word offends.
Like porcupines and nettles, have no friends.—Youth's Companion.

"Friendship is love boiled down and flavored with kind thoughts, kind words, and helpful deeds."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How did Abishai play the part of a false friend? 2. Why did David spare Saul? 3. Should one "pay back" another who has wronged him? 4. What harm will revengeful feelings do the one who harbors them? 5. What does Paul say about revenge in Rom. 12.19? 6. What did Jesus say in Lk. 6.27 about treatment of enemies? 7. What does Paul say in 1 Thess. 5.15 we should do to those who treat us ill? 8. In Rom. 12.21, how does Paul say we should overcome evil?

Note-Book Work. XIII. The Lesson Title; how Jonathan Proved his Friendship for David; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: FRIENDSHIPS THAT ARE WORTH WHILE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance? Between a friend and a comrade? What is a friend? What will a friend do for another? What does Shakespeare say should be done with one whose friendship has been tried? What beautiful story of friendship between two women have we studied? To what did it lead? What is the most famous story of friendship between two men? Why were David and Jonathan such true friends? Which one do you admire the more? How did Saul try to break up their friendship?

Saul was not a comfortable man to live with at any time. No one likes to live near a mountain that is liable to a sudden volcanic eruption. No one enjoys living with a boy or girl who, on the slightest provocation, or none at all, is liable to shower one with a whole vocabulary of angry words. Saul was very angry with Jonathan and he burst forth in violently angry words: why?

Let us hastily recall events in David's life between his victory over Goliath and his flight from King Saul. See The Historical Background.

Worth-While Friends. Have you friends? Are your friends all worth-while friends?

"Friends are like melons. Shall I tell you why?
To find one good you must a hundred try."

Have you tried your friend? What is your proof that he is a good friend?

You have different sorts of friends, of course. Have you a friend with whom you always have a good time, no matter what the circumstances? Can you say this of all friends? Why is there this difference?

Have you a friend to whom you always go for comfort when things go wrong with you? Why?

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." What does that mean? Who, according to that, is your most faithful friend?

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

If you hold a piece of ribbon grass in your hand and rub it one way you find it as smooth as a piece of satin, but if you rub it the other way it is full of little prickers. So our friends "rub" us the right way or the wrong way. Have you not known how easy it is in the companionship of some friends to show only your good qualities, while in the companionship of others you are strangely tempted to be perverse and uncomfortable, if not worse? For most people there are certain friends in whose company only noble thoughts arise. The friend who makes you desire and determine to live nobly is your best friend.

Have you consciously tried to be the friend who calls out only another's good qualities, who helps him to do and to be the best that it is possible for him to be and to do?

How to Gain Worth-While Friends. Would you have friends in the last years, you must pay premiums to insure that happiness. Pay now in the early and middle years by being yourself friendly, by showing that appreciation, that thoughtfulness that will turn casual acquaintances into staid and trustworthy friends. Would you have someone to stand with you in the trying hour; someone to put a hand under your load; someone more ready to give to you than to receive from you; someone who believes in you, when others refuse to do so; someone who cannot be separated by distance,—a brave, strong, gentle, true soul? Then pay now, in the passing days out of discerning love so that real friendship may be yours in the time to come.

You cannot pay up the premiums in bulk for happiness insurance. Quarterly payments through a period of years will profit you something, will buy you some insurance. But happiness insurance is best paid by *daily* premiums of loving thoughtfulness of those you know and love the best. Insure now for happiness tomorrow!—A. Eugene Bartlett, in The Joy Maker.

Your Best Friend. Dr. J. R. Miller's creed, it is said, could be expressed in five words: "Christ and I are friends," and all who knew him felt that he lived in very close communion with that Friend. "Christ is our Friend: that means everything we need," wrote Dr. Miller in one of his books. The consciousness that Christ is our Friend and we are his should check every evil thought, quell every bitter feeling, sweeten every emotion, and make all our life holy, true and heavenly."

And in a friendly letter Dr. Miller said: "What I want to help you to understand is that Christ is your truest and best friend. And you, being a Christian, are Christ's friend. That is, you have accepted his love, letting him into your heart, and have begun to love him in return. Religion really narrows itself down to a single statement—'Christ and I are friends.' Prayer is simply your talk with Christ as you would sit down with any dear, tender, close and trusted human friend for a little talk. When you realize that Christ and you are friends, close, tender friends—that Christ is your infinite Helper as well as your Savior—you will not have any trouble about prayers. You will be eager to sit down at his feet, as Mary sat, listening to his words."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. "Make friends; do not expect friends to make you."

A wish for friendship is formed quickly, but not friendship.—Aristotle.

This world only begins friendships.—Phillips Brooks.

O thou, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling-place.—Robert Burns.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What happened to David between the last lesson and this? 2. Why did Saul seek David's life? 3. Why were the spear and the cruse of water at the king's head? 4. Why did David spare Saul's life? 5. What effect did David's magnanimity have upon Saul? 6. Was it lasting? 7. What does Prov. 25.21, 22 say about the way in which to overcome an enemy? 8. What does Paul say about vengeance and the overcoming of evil in Romans 12.19-21? 9. What qualities has David shown in our study of his life thus far? 10. Can you obey Christ's command in our Golden Text?

Note-Book Work. Part IV. David and his Friend Jonathan.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: FRIENDSHIP: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT DOES

Additional Material: John 15.13-15.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In his hour of triumph David won a noble friend. He and Jonathan found each other, and their hearts were knit together. Better than all the glory gained by his victory over the giant, better than all the rewards promised by the king, was the gift of friendship from the true-hearted son of the king. There is no greater test of true friendship than willingness to suffer for its sake, a test to which Jonathan's friendship was sorely put.

Jonathan had much to lose by befriending David. It was largely for his sake that his father wished to kill David. "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom," Saul told Jonathan. "Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." Jonathan was too great to be actuated by self-interest; in a choice between a friend and a kingdom, he chose the friend. "Fear not," he said to David later in the wilderness of Ziph, "for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee." When Jonathan first told David of his love, he stripped himself of his robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle, 1 S. 18.4. This is a typical statement, declares George Matheson; it describes in one sentence the whole trend of his heart. From beginning to end, the love of Jonathan for David was a disrobing, a divestiture.

Jonathan braved his father's murderous anger rather than prove disloyal to his friend. He risked having his part in David's escape made known to the king. And later he went to David in the wood and *strengthened his hand in God* (1 S. 23.15-18). "It would have been a long time," a commentator admits, "before I would have left my palace in Gibeah to go down to the wood in Ziph to strengthen the hand of my best friend, if that strengthening was to carry him over my head, and put me under his feet!" There was no pang of jealousy in Jonathan's heart, for he loved his friend better than himself. Jonathan is one of the noblest characters in the Bible records.

Friendship at its Best. The fine friendship of a man for a man, or the gracious affection which a woman feels for a woman who is indeed her friend, becomes a noble form of human relationship.

It is easy for any man to fall in love with some beautiful woman—it is as easy as rolling off a log, and ever so much more delightful. It is easy for any man to inhale the sweet incense which arises from the devotion of some affectionate woman's heart. But where a man loves a man in an unsullied, unselfish friendship until his soul is knit with the soul of that man in an interlacing and interlocking of interest, then you have that harder, rarer form of human relationship which is rich with promise.

The young chap who is never quite happy with his fellows, who must always have some adoring young woman present in order to be content, is not quite all there. He is a "softy." He is lath and plaster where there should be quartered oak. He has more sentiment than principle; he has less muscle and more fat than go to the make-up of a virile manhood. The absence of the glamor and mystery which enters into all attachments between those of opposite sex clears the air for the manifestation of some of those fine forms of fidelity and devotion which belong to friendship at its best.

Jonathan, as the Crown Prince, had the least to gain and the most to lose by protecting the life and ministering to the well-being of this friend who might one day aspire to the throne. He made his affection a thing resplendent by its sheer

unselfishness. He saw that David might increase while he would decrease, yet even so the sky of his affection was unclouded by a single touch of jealousy. How great is that love which envieth not!

And David in turn made his own adequate response to this magnanimous interest. He showed himself in his whole bearing a man worthy of the friendship of a prince of the blood. Heaven be praised for men who can find joy and satisfaction in the friendship of their fellows.—Condensed from Five Young Men, by Dean Charles Reynolds Brown.

What Friendship Is. "Friendship is love with the selfish element left out." What does that mean?

"Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree."

What does that mean?

Who loves the other more, mother or child? Why? How do you feel toward a creature or a person whom you have served? Do you feel more kindly before or after the service? Is service a proof of love or a cause of love, or is it both? Which is really greater, to have a friend or to be a friend? Why?

Addison defines friendship as "A strong and habitual inclination of two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other." Can you find, or think of, a better definition?

Friendship Means Mutual Helpfulness. Friends are formed by weathering the same gales of fate together, by kinship of mind and heart, by common interest in a common ideal, by basic understanding, mutual dependence, thorough respect and loyalty that grows stronger as need grows greater. Acquaintances we may have many, but acquaintanceship is merely the grapes of possibility from which the rich wine of friendship is aged and mellowed.

Some people like the dividends on friendship, but not its assessments. They really do not need a friend, they want a bank. When there is not mutual helpfulness—not necessarily the same in kind or in degree, but the helpfulness in which each gives freely his best to the other as naturally as a flower exhales perfume—the friendship is like a patent that is nearing its time of expiration.—William George Jordan, in The Crown of Individuality.

Friend Father. A caller was being entertained in the library by the three-year-old son of the house. The guest noticed a portrait of a fine-looking man hanging on the wall and asked the little fellow who it was. The youngster looked up in surprise and said: "Don't you know who that is? Why, that is my friend—friend Father." Nothing more was needed to testify to the relationship between this father and son.—The Congregationalist.

Keep your Friendships in Repair. An old friend in Scotland, accepting an invitation to make a special run to London from Oxford—where he was lecturing—to dine with me, replied: "It will give me great pleasure to have this opportunity of *repairing a friendship that has never been broken.*" In the italicized words is the philosophy and secret of permanent friendship.—Alan Northman.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The highest friendship. See Friendship, by the Rev. Hugh Black; Friendship the Master Passion, by Dr. H. C. Trumbull.

2. Friendship, the ideal for a nation. Friendship is not only a beautiful thing for a man, but the realization of it is also the ideal for the State; for if citizens be friends, the justice which is the great concern of all organized societies is more than secured.—R. L. Nettleship.

3. America's friendship with Great Britain and France; how it was gained; what it has meant to us; what it involves on our part.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. As literature, what can you say about the books of Samuel? 2. Read the chapters intervening between the last lesson and this. 3. What reasons for putting Saul out of the way could David have given? 4. How do you think the warrior Abishai regarded David's failure to use his golden opportunity? 5. Why did David spare Saul? 6. What does Paul say about vengeance belonging to God? (Rom. 12.19-21.) 7. Is it right to hate what Germany has done? 8. Was it right to use force against Germany? 9. Does the command in our Golden Text apply to us and Germany? 10. How may we carry it out?

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

Golden Text

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Luke 6.27

LESSON 1 Samuel 26 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 31.1-8

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 24

1 SAMUEL 26.7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? 10 And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish. 11 Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. 12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; 14 and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? 15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a *valiant* man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. 16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

DAVID
Sought by Saul in Wilderness of Ziph
Spares Saul's Life when it is in his Power
Scoffs at Abner's Care of the King
Secures Saul's Confession of Guilt

I. SAUL SEEKS DAVID'S LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH, 1-4. Learning that David had taken refuge in the wilderness of Ziph, Saul pursued him with *three thousand chosen men of Israel.* Through spies David learned of his coming. Saul's enmity to David was unjust, it was founded on jealousy, and was relentless in its cruelty.

II. DAVID HAS SAUL IN HIS POWER, BUT SPARES THE KING'S

DAVID AND SAUL

From a Drawing by Simeon Solomon

LIFE, 5-12. *David came to the place where Saul was encamped,* and found the king, *within the place of the wagons:* the wagons were arranged in a circle as a barricade, and in the center slept the king while *the people were encamped round about him.* David returned to his followers and asked, *Who will go down with me to Saul?* Read 1 Ch. 2.20-25; 12.8-18 to learn the kind of men who had rallied around David: the proposed exploit must have appealed to them all. *Abishai the son of Zeruiah,* the latter David's sister, returned with David, and they found the king sleeping within the barricade of wagons, *with his spear,* the symbol of royal authority, *stuck in the ground at his head.* See Light from Oriental Life. *Then said Abishai to David: God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day.* "Abishai was religious after a strange, fierce fashion. God had delivered Saul into David's hands, and it would be a kind of sin not to kill him. How many bloody tragedies that same unnatural alliance of religion and murderous hate has varnished over!"(Maclaren). *Now therefore let me smite him,* continued Abishai. David could permit Abishai to do the slaying and profess himself guiltless. *I will not smite him the second time,* Abishai promised: one thrust with the spear in his powerful hand would be enough. To slay a sleeping enemy was considered cowardly even in those far-away times.

And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not. Here we see David the Magnanimous: "mighty of heart, mighty of mind—magnanimous—to be this is indeed to be great in life," declares Ruskin.

For who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? There was a sacredness attached to Saul's office, and though David could not honor the man, he could honor the king. "The man who respects to the utmost the Lord's anointing of another man is most apt to take seriously the Lord's anointing of himself." *As Jehovah liveth,* by this solemn oath David bound himself, *Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish.* Jehovah will carry out his own purposes; Saul shall meet his death as Jehovah wills, not as David wills: Saul shall die by a sudden stroke, or meet his death in battle (as he eventually did). *Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed.* "It will be remembered that in the play of Macbeth, Macbeth starts upon his tragic career when the witches suggest to him that he is to be king. In the play the witches stand for supernatural forces. Macbeth can see no way of fulfilling the destiny predicted for him except through violence. The story of David is even profounder in its moral significance than the story of Macbeth. From a source which stood to the Israelites as supernatural, David, too, learned that he was to be king, but his spirit was large enough to turn away from the course which to one of the Macbeth type would have seemed the sure road to the fulfilment of destiny"(Bishop McConnell, in S. S. Journal). Taking *the spear* that was at the king's head, *and the cruse of water,* as proofs of their visit, the two *gat them away: and no man knew it, because a deep sleep from Jehovah had fallen upon them,* a sleep so deep that it is explained as sent by God.

III. DAVID DERIDES THE KING'S BODYGUARD, verses 13-16. Orientals can make themselves heard at a great distance, and as day began to dawn, David from a safe place on the mountain top called across to Abner, whose duty it was to watch over the king's life. *Who art thou that criest to the king?* questioned Abner. Who art thou that criest and disturbest the king is the Vulgate Version. Sarcastically David answered, *Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel, wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over thy Lord the king?* How these words must have provoked Abner! *Ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your Lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head,* continued David, as those objects were evidently held aloft, evidences of the fact that he who had taken them away from the side of the king could have easily taken the king's life instead.

IV. DAVID CHALLENGES SAUL'S SENSE OF RIGHT AND WINS FOR THE MOMENT THE HEART OF THE KING, 17-25. *And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.* Then David appealed to Saul, asking him why he persisted in pursuing him. If Jehovah had instigated Saul to this enmity, let Jehovah be appeased by an offering, but if men had stirred up Saul against him let them be accursed: for they had driven him away from the land of Israel. Let me not die a violent death in a foreign land, he urged, and added that it

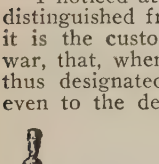
was unworthy of the king's dignity to hunt him, who was so insignificant and helpless; *for the king of Israel is come out,* with his three thousand men, *to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge on the mountains.*

Then said Saul, I have sinned; behold, I have played the fool; and have erred exceedingly. Saul was sincere for the moment, his better nature was aroused, and he promised he would not harm David, *because my life was precious in thine eyes this day.* "Saul recognized the unkingliness of his behavior, and the futility of his efforts against David. But he stayed there, stopping short of a faithful recognition of his position in the sight of God, as weighed in the balances of eternal justice. Many a time in Scripture do we meet with this confession. The Prodigal, Judas, Pharaoh, David, and Saul, uttered it; but in what different tones, and with what different motives! We need to winnow our words before God; not content with using expressions of penitence, unless we are very sure that they bear the mint-mark of heaven, and deserve the Master's Beatitude, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"(F. B. Meyer). David did not trust the king's feeling to be lasting. He bade the king send a young man for his spear, and reminded him that, as he had spared the king's life so the Lord would reward him and deliver him out of all tribulation. *Thou shalt surely prevail,* said the king, and they parted never to meet again. Saul returned to Gibeah; and David fled to the Philistines.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Take the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, verse 11. The spear was held in hand when the king sat in his palace or held council with his officers (1 S. 19.9; 22.6 ; it was kept at his side when he sat at table (1 S. 20.33) ; it marked the royal resting-place in camp (1 S. 26.11). In The Land and the Book, Mr. Thomson says:

"I noticed at all the encampments which we passed, that the sheik's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that, when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or rests is thus designated. The whole of the scene in 1 Sam. 26 is perfectly natural, even to the deep sleep into which all had fallen, so that David and Abishai could walk among them in safety. The Arabs sleep heavily, especially when fatigued. Often, when traveling, my muleteers and servants have agreed to watch together in places thought to be dangerous; but in every instance I soon found them to be fast asleep, and generally their slumbers were so profound that I could not only walk among them without their waking, but might have taken the very aba with which they were covered. Then the cruse of water at Saul's head is in exact accordance with the customs of the people at this day. No one ventures to travel over those deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place it at the bolster, so that the owner can reach it during the night. The Arabs eat their dinner in the evening and it is generally of such a nature as to create thirst, and the quantity of water which they drink is enormous. The cruse is therefore in perpetual demand."



Spear and Cruse

David stood on the top of the mountain afar off, and cried to the people, verses 13, 14. As a rule, the peasants have very loud voices, and, as the deep valleys which separate the mountains carry the sound very well, they call to each other across formidable distances. To call attention they call out *Hay ya...* So and so, *Hay!* and when the person addressed has heard, he answers, *Hay!* This calling is loud, but calm and distinct (to their ears), and they understand every word. The Hebrews also had very loud voices; the most remarkable and seemingly unnecessary case, was when Joshua read the law to the people from Ebel to Gerizim. The case of Jonathan calling down to Shechem from the top of Gerizim is excusable and easy, as he had to tell his parable insulting Abimelech, and then flee southwards before the servants of Abimelech could climb the mountain (Judges 9.7-21). David calling out to Saul across the deep valley of Khreitun was the easiest task; the voice carries excellently there against the high rocks, and escape is easy.—Palestine Exploration Fund.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What Judge reached an enemy's camp without being discovered? On what occasion did Saul show himself magnanimous? How had Saul treated David? What was the first occasion on which Saul said, "I have sinned"? Was he really repentant then? What did Peter say about the treatment of those who wrong us? (Ninth lesson of the First Quarter.)

David at Nob. After the interview with Jonathan in the field near Gibeah, David led the life of an outlaw. He fled first to Nob, where "on the slope of Olivet, overlooking the still unconquered city of Jerusalem, all unconscious of the future sanctity of that venerable hill, stood the last relic of the ancient nomadic times—the Tabernacle of the Wanderings, round which since the fall of Shiloh had dwelt the descendents of the house of Eli. It was a little colony of priests. No fewer than eighty-five persons ministered there in the white linen dress of the priesthood, and all their families and herds were gathered round them." David was famished and unarmed and he besought Ahimelech the priest to give him the shew bread. Ahimelech was cautious, but David claimed to be on a secret mission from Saul, and the priest yielded, giving him five loaves of the sacred bread which had been in the Tabernacle and also Goliath's sword, which David had won and placed in the sanctuary. The consequences for this little colony of priests were terrible, for Doeg, the Edomite, was present at the time and later he informed Saul of the service rendered David, and Saul ordered a ruthless massacre of all the priests and their households. Only Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escaped and fled to David. This incident is the only one in the life of David to which Christ referred, using it as an example of the fact that the claims of humanity are greater than that of the ceremonial law. "Have ye not read what David did when he was hungry?" he asked. "How he entered into the house of God, and ate the shew bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?"

In the Wilderness of Judea. From Ahimelech David went to Achish, King of Gath, but fearing that Achish would slay him he feigned madness in order to escape. He found a hiding-place in the Cave of Adullam. Hearing of this, his own kindred and some four hundred men came to him, "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him." After taking his parents for safety to Mizpeh of Moab, he returned to Judah, to the forest of Hereth.

With his band of valiant men, now grown to six hundred, David rescued the town of Keilah from the Philistines, but fearing that the people whom he had saved would deliver him up to Saul, he left for the wilderness of Ziph. Here Jonathan came to him and "strengthened his hand in God." "Fear not; thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee," said that great-hearted friend whom he never saw again.

The Ziphites betrayed David's hiding-place to Saul, and he came in pursuit. Guided by Ziphite spies, Saul and his men almost surrounded David in the wilderness of Maon, but David escaped just in time. Fortunately, Saul was recalled to fight the Philistines. David and his followers took refuge in the rocks and caves of Engedi, on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

The death of the prophet Samuel is recorded. Next we are told about David's request for food from Nabal, because he and his men had afforded Nabal's shepherds protection, Nabal's curt refusal, his wife Abigail's gifts and intercession, the death of Nabal, and David's marriage to Abigail. He also married Abinoam of Jezreel. Meanwhile Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to one of his men.

Again the Ziphites informed Saul that David was hiding in their wilderness on the hill of Hachilah before the desert, and with three thousand men Saul came to capture him.

The Two Accounts of David's Sparing Saul's Life. At En-gedi, Saul unknowingly entered the cave in whose farthest recesses David was hiding, and his men told David that Jehovah had delivered his enemy into his hand. But David refused to touch "Jehovah's anointed," and merely cut off the bottom of Saul's robe. When Saul left the cave David followed, and showed him his trophy in proof that he had spared his life. "Saul lifted up his voice and wept,

and said, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil." This account has so much in common with the sparing of Saul's life which is the subject of our lesson today, and it is so unnatural that such an event should take place twice, that the two accounts are probably two different versions of one event.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

"The story of Saul's hunt after David, and of David's narrow escape, becomes very vivid among these tossed and broken hills of Judea where the valleys are all alike and large bodies of men may camp near each other without knowing it," writes Dr. George Adam Smith in his Geography. "Ambushes are everywhere possible, and alarms pass rapidly across the bare and silent hills. You may travel for hours, and feel as solitary as at sea without a sail in sight; but if you are in search of anyone, your guide's signal will make men leap from slopes that did not seem to shelter a rabbit; and if you are suspected, your passage may be stopped by a dozen men, as if they had sprung from the earth."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

David makes use of sarcasm with telling effect. What could be more irritating to Abner than the words: Art not thou a valiant man? And who is like to thee in Israel? With what better words could David taunt Abner for not having kept watch over his king? The opportunity was too good for David to lose; moreover, in this way by a very few words he could let his enemies know what he wished them to know. Tempting opportunities for sarcastic observations occur in every Sunday-school class, and especially where a teacher has one or two irritating pupils. But the use of sarcasm there is always fatal to a teacher's good influence.

"I have sinned: I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly," acknowledges Saul at the end of his conversation with David. Had David called Saul a fool, would the king have seen his folly? David first showed Saul a great kindness, and then challenged his sense of right, and the result was that Saul stood unveiled to himself. The former graceless way always arouses ire: the latter gracious way arouses the conscience. "The finest reproofs are born out of benefits."

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: "PAYING BACK"

Suggestions for Beginning the Lesson. Back in the days when David was a lad on his father's farm in Bethlehem, three other boys were living with him. Although these boys, Joab, Asahel and Abishai, were about David's own age, they were really nephews, the sons of a sister much older than he, for David belonged to a large family, you know. He was the youngest of eight brothers and had several older sisters. When David had to hide from Saul, because Saul sought to kill him, he found a hiding place in the Cave of Adullam. Many of his friends who did not like Saul joined him there—among them were Joab and Abishai. David's father and mother came, too, but as they would not be safe with him, he went with them to Moab and asked the king to keep them in safety.

All this time Saul was hunting David. The Ziphites, in whose wild country David was living, went to Gibeah and told Saul where David could be found. Saul came with a great army, 3,000 men, to capture David. David had only 600 men with him.

One night David and Abishai stole out to Saul's camp. They found it unprotected and every man asleep. They made their way cautiously through the camp until they came upon the wagons which were arranged in a circle. On the ground in the center Saul and Abner and others were sleeping. At the king's head was his spear stuck into the ground. It was a fateful moment for Saul. His life hung in the balance. And it was a fateful moment for David. He had to make one of the great decisions of his life.

How David Paid Saul Back. Abishai loved David and was ready to go anywhere with him, and would gladly have risked his life for him. But at this moment he played the part of a false friend. He made an evil suggestion to

David. "Now is your chance," he said. "You can get rid of your enemy and pay him back for all he has made you suffer. You need have nothing to do with it. I'll kill him, if you but say the word." But David resented the thought and shrank from the deed. "No," he said, "No, I will not take such an advantage of even an enemy, nor stain my soul with such a wrong." The two men, you see, took very different views of the same opportunity. Abishai said, "Here's a chance of getting square with our foe, of paying him back." David said, "No, here's a chance of being noble, of rising above all thought of revenge."

And how did David manage to resist this great temptation and act in such a noble way? Because of his fear and reverence for God. Saul was his enemy, but Saul was God's chosen man, God's anointed one, and David would not harm what God had chosen or destroy what God had anointed. If Saul had proved himself unworthy, he must be left to the judgment of God.

We are sure to have the same sort of chance. Sooner or later some one who has wronged us will be at our mercy and we shall be able to "pay him back." We can say a word, perhaps, that will cost him his reputation. But we will not do it if we think more of reverencing him who said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," than we do of our own revenge.

David's action, you say, was to his own disadvantage. It meant more persecution, longer exile, more years of misery. How do we know? The probability is that if he had let Saul be killed it would have set the people against him, and would have brought him harder conflicts before he reached the throne. It not only saved him from greater troubles, but it showed him to be the better man of the two. How little poor, bitter, persecuting Saul looks beside David the Magnanimous! It saved David from a crime and stain that would have been a bitter memory all the days of his life. And it prevented a fine adventure from being spoiled. What a gallant thing it was, to raid that camp! What daring it showed! It was Saul's repentance, momentarily, at least. If those two men had come back stained with the blood of the king they would have been murderers, not heroes.

It always pays to be good to your enemy. If you don't gain by it in the long run, you find a great satisfaction in the thought, "I didn't pay him back, I spared him when I might have hurt him."

A Resentful but Magnanimous Dog. A gentleman who lived in Rome had a Scottish deerhound called Eric. This dog formed a friendship with a large French dog. Eric would now and then bring his friend to his master's studio, where he was always very kindly treated. One day, when the gentleman was returning home from his studio, the two friends were attacked by a number of dogs, and there was a great battle. When the fight had continued for some time, the French dog slunk off and left Eric to finish the battle alone. This the plucky dog cheerfully did, and then went home to have his wounds washed. But the next day, when, as usual, the French dog called, Eric would not take the smallest notice of him. In vain the gentleman coaxed and scolded, and brought the French dog close up to Eric. He would not even turn his head in the direction of his former friend. This line of conduct he pursued ever afterwards, evidently thinking that he had been mistaken in the French dog's character as a gentleman, and must decline all further intercourse with him.—Nora S. Webster.

When the Long Lane Turned. When I was a lad of fourteen, a crotchety old farmer, named Josiah Stebbins, ordered me and two other boys out of his woods, where we were gathering chestnuts, said a gentleman recently, in reminiscent conversation with a friend. Of course, Mr. Stebbins was within his rights, but there were bushels of the nuts that he could never use, and his rough, abusive language angered us.

"We'll get even with you for this!" Lyman Crosier shouted back defiantly, and he added in a lower tone, "It's a long lane that don't turn somewhere."

The other boys soon forgot the whole matter; but as for me, the adage about the "long lane" was scarcely out of my mind for a day, and I repeated it to myself every time I saw Mr. Stebbins. It did not occur to me that I was nursing a revengeful spirit; on the contrary, I felt rather proud of standing up for my own rights.

One October afternoon the next year, as I was crossing a corner of Ira Judson's pasture, I saw eleven lambs jump over a low place in the fence into Mr. Stebbins's field. When I reached the top of the ridge the lambs were

nowhere in sight. There was a small unused hay barn in the next field, and here I found the frightened animals huddled, the sagging door closed behind them. Plainly, the lambs had jostled against the door when they crowded in, setting it aswing, and the high wind had done the rest. To my mind, the accident was full of possibilities. The heavy door was not likely to be pushed open, and when the animals were missed it would be easy to direct the search in the right direction. Then I should find the turning of the long lane.

I decided to take Lyman Crosier into my confidence, and actually set off for the Crosier farmhouse; but halfway there I halted. Could I state the circumstances in a way to reflect creditably on the part I was playing? I did not intend to disclose all the facts, but only to tell Lyman that I had found the lambs shut up in Josiah Stebbins's hay barn. I had always hated lying and deceit, and it shocked me to realize how near I had come to telling my friend a falsehood. No, I would keep my secret.

Could I? I stopped short, as if a Real Questioner blocked my path, demanding an instant answer. Sometimes I think he did. God knew all the details that I had hesitated to relate to a schoolmate, and what must he think of me? Was the thought of petty revenge I had cherished any more pleasing to him than the open deceit I had refrained from practicing? And could I carry my project through without acting a lie?

I opened the door of the hay barn and let the lambs out before I returned home, and I told Ira Judson that they were in Mr. Stebbins's field. No one else knew of the matter. That was the turning point of my whole life, for out there in the silence of the autumn fields I learned to measure life and conduct by God's standard.—Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.—Memory Verses: Romans 12:20, 21.

We always hurt ourselves when we try to hurt others.

Spite is a little word, but it represents as strange a jumble of feelings and compound of discords, as any polysyllable in the language.—Dickens.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where and when was David first anointed King? 2. Over what tribe was he anointed king at Hebron? 3. What had happened before this event at the Battle of Gilboa? (1 S. 31.1-6.) 4. Where is Hebron? 5. Who ruled for awhile over all Israel except Judah? (2 S. 2.8-10.) 6. How did he meet his death? (2 S. 4.5, 6.) 7. When at last the tribes of Israel came to David, why did they say they wanted him to be their king?

Note-Book Work. XIV. The Lesson Title; how David spared Saul's life; what you think of David's action; a statement about "paying back"; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

Additional Material: Matthew 5.38-48; Romans 12.17-21.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Who was Robin Hood? Yes, a famous outlaw of England. What were some of his exciting adventures? Just as exciting was the life of David as an outlaw. What made him an outlaw? What exciting adventures did he have?

David's Self-Restraint. Think how Saul treated David! Instead of rewarding David for what he had done for him and his country, Saul tried to have others kill him, and even himself made several attempts upon David's life, and thus drove him from home and country, forcing him to wander about in the wilderness of Judea, and pursuing him as one would a wild animal from place to place, so that David was never sure of his life from one hour to another. Must not David have longed to be free from this deadly enemy?

When he stood beside the sleeping king, now wholly in his power, thoughts such as these must have coursed through his mind: "There he lies, the wicked king, who has treated me, his faithful servant, so shamefully. Revenge is sweet. He deserves to be killed, for he has tried so many times to kill me. Moreover, we are engaged in warfare, he and his thousands and I and my hundreds, and to kill an enemy in warfare is no sin. The night is dark, and no one will see us. It is true, as my faithful Abishai has said, God has delivered him into my hands. I shall never have peace until this man is dead, and once

he is dead, I can return to my beloved land in safety. Yes, I can even be king, held in honor by all the people!"

But other thoughts, too, came to David: "Do it not. God has said, Thou shalt not kill. And he has said also, Vengeance is mine, I will repay. Saul is not an enemy like the Philistines; he belongs to my own nation, and although he is at war with me, I am not at war with him, I am only on the defensive. Even if no one sees me, God sees. Although Abishai counsels me to revenge myself and commit murder, God counsels otherwise. And it is no common man who lies here so sound asleep before me; he is God's anointed, his life must be held sacred by me. Granted that I could gain outward peace and rest by his death, my conscience would never give me peace within, and to be tormented by my conscience would be worse than to be tormented by Saul. If God wills to make me king, he will do it in his own good time. Patience, all is in God's hands, he will bring Saul to that end which is in accordance with his designs, and me to the throne when the right time comes. Saul shall live, and I shall endure, till then."

In some such way as this David fought out the battle within himself, and won the victory over his own desire for revenge, and for preëminence. It was a greater victory than that which he had won over the giant Goliath. To fight self is the hardest of all battles, to conquer self is the greatest of all victories.

Overcoming Evil with Good. "A man put up a 'spite fence' five feet high between himself and his neighbor. Soon after one of his horses choked and he wanted a veterinary surgeon. He went to his neighbor and asked for the use of his telephone, as his own was out of order. Here was the Christian's opportunity, the use of the telephone was willingly lent, and personal first-aid was offered. That afternoon the fence was removed."

General Howard's Way. When first appointed to the command of a regiment located at Governor's Island, General O. O. Howard used to walk up and down Broadway, New York, where he was jostled in the crowds. This jostling pained and irritated him, as his arm had been amputated at the shoulder. In his fear that this irritation would sour his disposition he used to pray, as any one ran into him and hurt him, "God bless him!" This habit became such second nature with him that he was constantly praying for those about him.—Dr. F. E. Clark.

Words to Treasure. Hath any wronged thee? Be bravely revenged. Slight it, and the work's begun. Forgive it, 'tis finished. He is below himself that is not above an injury.—Sir Thomas Browne.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I will permit no enemy to degrade my soul to the level of hatred.—Booker T. Washington.

In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it by, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon.—Bacon.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What lessons have the Books of Samuel for us? 2. What were some of David's experiences after he spared Saul's life? (1 S. 27-30.) 3. How did Saul and Jonathan meet their death? (1 S. 31.) 4. Read David's lament over Saul and Jonathan. (2 S. 1.) 5. What qualities had David shown befitting a king? 6. Why did Judah choose David as king? 7. For what is Hebron famous? 8. How long afterward did Israel make David their king? 9. What three reasons did the men of Israel give for asking David to be their king? 10. What is the meaning of "We are thy bone and thy flesh"? 11. What is the meaning of "Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel"? 12. How did David show great tact? 13. How did David deserve his success? 14. What is success?

Note-Book Work. Part V. David's Magnanimity.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: TREATMENT OF WRONGDOERS (BY INDIVIDUALS AND BY SOCIETY)

Additional Material: Matthew 5.43-47; 18.15-35; Romans 13.1-7; 2 Corinthians 2.5-11.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Tasso being told that he had a fair opportunity of taking advantage of a very bitter enemy, replied: "I wish not to plunder him, but there are things I wish to take away from him—not his honor, his wealth, or his life—but his ill-will."

This admirably describes David's attitude toward his bitter enemy, Saul. He had a splendid opportunity of taking Saul's life. In the words of Dr. Blaikie,

nothing is more critical than a sudden opportunity of indulging an ardent passion; with scarcely a moment for deliberation, one is apt to be hurried blindly along, and at once to commit the deed. With all his noble nature, Robert Bruce could not refrain from plunging his dagger into the heart of treacherous Comyn, even in the convent of Minorite friars. The discipline of David's spirit must at this time have been admirable.

A Providence or a Temptation? It was a temptation all but overwhelming. Particularly for an Eastern mind, it did look extremely like a divinely sent opportunity. David had a long list of grievances to settle, and one thrust of a dirk would pay them all.

But what is the principle that rules his action, curbing both the savage purposes of those around him and the hot-fever racing in his own veins? What but this, that men must not go faster to any goal than the will of God permits? Do not take short cuts to happiness, if to do it you have to leave the high road of rectitude and mercy. He would not be king before God's own time at such a price as that! How often men ruin their lives by, as we say, "playing Providence" to their own career! What looks like Providence may be a snare of the devil. So beware of that policy on which you can embark only by soiling your clear sense of right. Beware of side-paths that lead through the mire. Stick to the highway of the king, and leave the future issues in his keeping.—H. R. Mackintosh, in Life on God's Plan.

Who Is Your Saul? Who is the man that stands in the way of your promotion? Who sits in the seat that should by this time have been yours? Who is the man that casts the javelin of slander and detraction at your good name? Who has cost you home and friends by his spite, and malice, and jealousy? Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.—Condensed from Bible Characters by Dr. Alexander Whyte.

Avenge Not Yourselves. A young man who had been insulted by another was resolved to have his revenge. He confided his plan to a friend, an old man. The friend tried his best to change the young man's purpose, but the poison of anger had so entered the young man's soul that he would not heed the words of his friend. Then said the old man: "You are determined to be revenged—well, I will say nothing further against it. But let us pray together before we separate." They knelt down and the old man prayed:—"It is no longer necessary for thee, dear Heavenly Father, to keep this young man under thy protecting care. He is in open rebellion. He will have his own revenge. And thou hast said in thy word, Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God; for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. He will not heed thy command, but will take vengeance into his own hands. Now, dear Lord, since he will not listen to thy voice, let him go as he wills. But comfort me, dear Lord, for I am much grieved over the young man—I love him and my soul grieves over the course he is taking." Thus the old man prayed, and the heart of the young man was touched. He, too, began to pray. He prayed for pardon, and besought God to drive away from his heart the poison of anger and hatred and to give him a heart of love and forgiveness. The prayer was heard and the two enemies became firm friends.

Avenge the Wronged.

There are many kinds of hate, as many kinds of fire;
And some are fierce and fatal with murderous desire;
And some are mean and craven, revengeful, selfish, slow;
They hurt the man who holds them more than they hurt his foe.

And yet there is a hatred that purifies the heart,
The anger of the better against the baser part,
Against the false and wicked, against the tyrants' sword,
Against the enemies of love, and all that hate the Lord.

Oh, cleansing indignation, oh flame of righteous wrath,
Give me a soul to see thee and follow in thy path!
Save me from selfish virtue, arm me for fearless fight,
And give me strength to carry on, a soldier of the right.

—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

Can We Love Germany? "Love your enemies" has been called the impossible commandment. Is it possible for us as a nation to love the German nation?

In the first place let us remember that love for an enemy does not mean indifference to his wrong-doing. Our deepest resentment, our perfect hatred, was aroused and rightly aroused, by the brutalities and atrocities of the Germans in the War. While German ideals spell the quintessence of barbarity, we must loathe those ideals. Such loathing, such hatred, is pleasing to God. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." "A wicked man is an abomination to the Lord." "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!" The more one loves righteousness, the more he will hate iniquity.

In the next place, love for an enemy does not mean that we must suffer him to do others harm. We went to war with Germany because she menaced the world. Force was the only weapon the Germans could understand, and we rightly used force to conquer and disarm her, to render her powerless to continue her "frightfulness." There was no other way, and it was a way entirely compatible with the love for enemies that Christ enjoined. We could do this and still love them in the same way that Christ loved the Scribes and Pharisees whom he cursed.

What, then, does love for an enemy mean? It means that we shall wish for his best welfare. The Germany which meant the Lusitania and Belgium, Edith Cavell and Lissauer's Hymn of Hate, was once the Germany that meant Luther and Beethoven, Gœthe and Schiller. We are working for Germany's best welfare as we work to turn her back to her true self. The war was necessary to accomplish this. It is the aim of a Christian to make his enemy worthy of love: it is the aim of our Christian nation to make the German nation worthy of love. We went to war with Germany, not for vengeance, but for international justice, including justice to Germany herself. As the Germans repent and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance, we shall have affection for them. Meanwhile, we wish to have justice done them.

God's Way. By love, long suffering, the spirit of forgiveness and forbearance, we must meet and overcome the unkindnesses and injustice we may be called upon to suffer. Among the striking pictures at Kew Gardens is one representing a flourishing fig tree which has nearly strangled another tree, in a fork of whose branches it started life as a seeding epiphyte. It soon grew apace, and sent down many roots to the earth, where they obtained food and grew in size, finally enclosing and crushing the trunk of the nurse-tree. So evil is to be overcome by good. We must seek to master evil by beauty, love, and righteousness, as God does.—Dr. Watkinson.

Not Our Way. A few days ago—wrote a correspondent of a British newspaper during the War—I fell into conversation with two old villagers—a shepherd and a market gardener. The old shepherd waxed wrathful as he spoke of the Germans. "We don't want no prisoners," said he; "what I says is, serve 'em the same as they serve the Belgians." The gardener smiled with a slight touch of superiority and pulled himself up straight. "Well, Garge, y' know I been in the service, and you see that's not our way; two wrongs don't make a right, do 'em?" I went away feeling lifted up in heart.

For Enlargement or Discussion. Our duty to respect the office, if we can not respect the one who holds it.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are some lessons which the Books of Samuel have for us? 2. Give an account of David's life at Ziklag. 3. Where was David at the time of the battle in which Saul met his fate? (2 S. 1.) 4. What reasons for Saul's death are given in 1 Ch. 10.13, 14? 5. How did the Philistines treat the bodies of Saul and his sons? (1 S. 31.7-10.) 6. How did the ancient people regard the fate of having one's body left unburied? 7. For what were the men of Jabesh-gilead grateful to Saul? (1 S. 11.1-11.) 8. How did David lament the death of Saul and Jonathan? (2 S. 1.17-27). 9. Why had David been willing to wait, rather than take the throne by force? 10. Was the Israelite monarchy an absolute monarchy? (1 S. 10.25; 2 S. 3; 1 K. 12.3.) 11. In the parable of the Talents how is success attained? 12. How does Paul say in 1 Cor. 9.24-27 that success is acquired? 13. Name some false standards of success. 14. Mention men or women who are called successful but who are really failures. 15. What was Christ's standard of greatness?

DAVID SUCCEEDS SAUL AS KING

Golden Text

Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart
And lean not upon thine own understanding. Proverbs 3.5

LESSON 2 Samuel 2.1-7; 5.1-5 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 18.1-6

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Samuel 31.1-13; 2 Samuel 1.1-27; 2.8-4.12

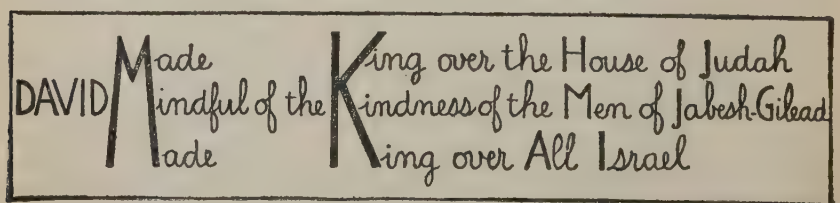
2 SAMUEL 2.1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron? 2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. 5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now Jehovah show loving-kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. 7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

5.1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. DAVID RETURNS TO HEBRON AND IS MADE KING OVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH, 2.1-4. *And it came to pass after this,* after the result of the Battle of Gilboa was made known to David, and he had slain the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul, 1 S. 16 (see the Historical Background), *David inquired of Jehovah,* through the high priest Abiathar and his Urim and Thummim whether he should return to Judah. He was still willing to await patiently God's time to gain his throne. "We must apply to God not only when we are in distress, but even when the world smiles upon us, and second causes work in favor of us," observes Matthew Henry. *Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?* is the question he asked; he had fled to the Philistines and was

living as their vassal at Ziklag, which lay much lower than Judah's territory on the highlands, and hence his journey would be *up*.

Receiving a favorable answer, David went northward with all his household and his men, some six hundred of them, 1 S. 27.2 and 1 Ch. 12, and settled in Hebron and the cities round about. His two wives are mentioned (polygamy was the practice of the times): *Ahinoam the Jezreelitess,* or native of Jezreel (1 S. 25.43, 44) and *Abigail the wife of Nabal,* that is, the former wife of Nabal: his death and David's marriage to Abigail are recorded in 1 S. 25.36-42. Hither came the men of Judah and *anointed David king over the house of Judah.* This was his coronation; recall Samuel's anointing of David, lesson XI of last Quarter. "How much choice they had in the matter is difficult to say. The master of a devoted band of seasoned soldiers was a very dangerous man to reject. On the other hand, the public defence was likely to be well attended to by such a man, and David had always been well-disposed towards his own people. That he continued to acknowledge the suzerainty of Achish seems almost certain, from the fact that the Philistines allowed him to extend his kingdom as far as he did"(Smith).

II. DAVID THANKS THE MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD FOR THEIR KINDNESS TO SAUL, 2.4b-7. The elders of Judah told David, among other things, how the men of Jabesh-gilead had rescued Saul's body and given it burial: see 1 S. 31.7-13. To bury the dead was regarded as a pious act, and David was grateful to them. Accordingly, he *sent messengers unto them* to thank them for their good deed and to promise to reward them. While David was grateful, his message was at the same time a politic one, as by his praise he doubtless wished to win their loyalty, for they held an important position among the trans-Jordanic tribes. It was with them that he later found refuge when forced to flee from Absalom, 2 S. 17.24-29. *Jehovah show loving kindness and truth unto you,* was David's expressed wish, but he added, *and I also will requite you this kindness.* "Good wishes are good things, and instances of gratitude, but they are too cheap to be rested in where there is an ability to do more" (Matthew Henry). *Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant,* urged David, and announced that he had become Saul's successor. "The house of David has anointed me king, and it will be wisdom on your part to concur with them and be valiant," is David's meaning. His friendly overtures were not met: well, he could wait yet longer for the right time to come.

III. THE DUAL KINGDOM, 2.8-4. A period of seven and a half years is covered by this history which is omitted from our printed text. The tribes of Israel united their fortunes with Ishbosheth, Saul's only surviving son, whom Abner, the captain of the army, had taken across the Jordan and proclaimed king at Mahanaim. During this time there were continual feuds between the rival generals, Abner on the north and Joab on the south, though we have the record of only one battle. David seems to have kept out of the contests. His power continually increased, while that of Ishbosheth, who seems to have been only a tool in the hands of Abner, decreased. Whether from selfish motives, because he saw that Ishbosheth's star was waning, or because he resented the suspicion of Ishbosheth that he was seeking the throne in claiming for himself the widowed Rizpah, one of Saul's wives, Abner made overtures to David to make him king of the northern tribes. David demanded as proof of Abner's loyalty that Michal, Saul's daughter, should be returned to him, for as the son-in-law of Saul he would be heir to Saul's throne. Abner seems to have compelled Ishbosheth to bring this about. Abner visited Hebron and, after being hospitably entertained, departed. Joab, David's powerful general who had long vowed vengeance against Abner because he had slain his brother Asahel, caused him to return by a false message, and then treacherously slew him. David mourned his death. Ishbosheth could not long maintain his kingdom without Abner. The disaffection grew until suddenly in the stillness of an eastern noontime two of his captains entered his room and stabbed their king as he slumbered. In great haste they carried his head to David as a welcome present, and met the same fate that David meted out to the Amalekite who claimed to have slain Saul.

IV. DAVID MADE KING OVER ALL ISRAEL, 5.1-5. *Then all the tribes of Israel*—all the tribes except Judah, over whom he had been reigning—*came to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying.* They gave three reasons for making David their king. First, *We are thy bone and thy flesh;* they were kinsmen,

descended from the same ancestor. Second, *In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel;* David had long been their military leader. Third, *Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel;* compare Dt. 17.15.

And King David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah. The covenant stated, no doubt, the duties and rights of the king of a limited monarchy (1 S. 10.25) and of his subjects. See the additional statement given in 1 Ch. 12.23-40, and read Ps. 101. *And they anointed David king over Israel.* "All things come round to him who will wait" (Longfellow).

In Hebron David reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah, the God of hosts, was with him.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They that buried Saul, 2.4. The Philistines had cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor. It was common oriental practice to strip and even to mutilate the bodies of enemies left dead on the battlefield. Beheading was a common practice. At Nineveh Layard found numerous representations of warriors bearing away the heads of their victims as trophies, or presenting them to their kings. To be left unburied was to the Israelites, as to all ancient peoples, a terrible thought, the greatest of disgraces. Compare the number of times that Jeremiah threatens that bodies will be left unburied (Jer. 7.33; 8.12; 16.4; 22.19; 36.30). The royal bodies were first burned by the men of Jabesh-gilead, and then their ashes were buried. Roberts speaks in this connection of the practice among the Hindus. "Two of their thirty-two charities are to burn the bodies of those whose relatives can not do it, and to pay for the beatings of tom-toms to the place of burning. It is therefore considered a work of great merit to perform the funeral rites for a respectable stranger, or for those whose relatives are not able to meet the expenses."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When and by whom was David first anointed? What did that anointing denote? (Divine consecration to the kingship.) By whom was Saul made king? What wars have been fought with the Philistines since Saul became king? How had Saul persecuted David? How had David shown his willingness to await God's time to bring him to the throne?

David at Ziklag. Realizing that after his revulsion of feeling certain to come, Saul would be more hostile than ever because of his confession and of his own (David's) magnanimous treatment, David as a last resource fled with his household and six hundred valiant men to his country's long-time enemies, the Philistines. Achish, King of Gath, welcomed him and gave him the town of Ziklag, on the edge of the desert south of Beersheba. David made raids upon the Amalekites and other desert tribes farther south, and brought the spoil to Achish as proof of his loyalty to his new master and hostility to his kinsmen, for he pretended to Achish that his raids had been made in certain districts belonging to his own tribe and its allies. From day to day valiant Israelites came to him at Ziklag, so we are told in First Chronicles, until there was a great host with him.

When the Philistines determined to make a concerted attack on the Israelites, so great was the confidence of Achish in David that he ordered him and his men to accompany him and join in the attack. David obeyed and started with Achish. We wonder what course would have been his had he reached the scene of battle, but fortunately the difficulty was solved for him by the other Philistine princes, who doubted his loyalty to their cause and compelled Achish to send him and his men back. On reaching Ziklag again it was found that the Amalekites had taken advantage of their absence and burned the town, carrying off the women and children and spoil. David pursued them. An Egyptian slave of the Philistines aided him in finding them in the desert; his attack was wholly successful; he rescued the women and children and returned

with rich spoil, a portion of which he sent as gifts to the elders of Judah and their allies.

Israelites and Philistines in Battle Array. Saul's Visit to the Witch of Endor. Meanwhile the Philistines had advanced through the Plain of Esdraelon and pitched their camp by the town of Shunem, on the southern slope of the Hill of Moreh. The Israelites had encamped at the foot of Mt. Gilboa, south of the Plain, near the spot where Gideon had had his camp, before his attack on the Midianites. The night before the last battle, Saul, feeling himself deserted by Jehovah, had gone around the Philistine camp to the northern slope of the Hill of Moreh, to consult the witch at Endor. He besought her to summon Samuel from the dead. She claimed to do this, and Saul believed that the voice he heard was that of the prophet. The voice said that Jehovah had departed from Saul, that the battle on the morrow would go against him, and that he and his sons would perish. Utterly disheartened, the king returned to await a hopeless conflict.

Result of the Battle and Death of Saul and Jonathan. On the morrow the Philistines made their charge, drove the Israelites up the slopes of Gilboa, and utterly routed them. Brave, noble-hearted Jonathan and his two brothers were among the multitude slain. Seeing himself the mark at which the Philistine archers were aiming their arrows, Saul's soul revolted at the horrible thought of falling wounded into their hands, and he besought his armor-bearer to thrust him through with his sword. The armor-bearer refused his wish; when he saw Saul fall upon his own sword, he did the same, and perished with his king. Combining with this account that of the next chapter in 2 Samuel, we suppose that Saul was leaning heavily on his sword, seemingly dead to the eyes of the terrified armor-bearer, when an Amalekite, in search of spoil, came up and had no scruples in carrying out Saul's expressed wish.

The Royal Bodies Impaled; Rescued by the Men of Jabesh-Gilead. Darkness fell on the battle-field. On the morrow the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. Exultantly they cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor, and carried the bodies of the king and the princes to Bethshan and fastened them upon the walls. Saul's armor was finally deposited in their heathen temple, after it had been sent with Saul's head around to the Philistine cities to proclaim the news of his death, of the defeat of the Israelites, and also of the latter's flight from the near-by cities.

When the men of Jabesh-gilead heard what had been done to the bodies of Saul and his sons, they showed their devotion by crossing the Jordan at night and rescuing them from the walls of Bethshan. Returning to Jabesh, they buried them under a conspicuous tamarisk tree with all fitting honor, fasting seven days according to strict custom.

> "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
> Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
> How are the mighty fallen,
> And the weapons of war perished!"

David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan. Two days after his return to Ziklag from his pursuit of the marauders, news of the battle of Gilboa reached David through an Amalekite who had been on the battle-field. He brought David Saul's crown and bracelets, told him that he found the king leaning on his spear and at the king's entreaty killed him. Instead of the expected reward, he received death at David's hands for having killed the Lord's anointed. In memory of Saul and Jonathan, David composed a song of lamentation which afterwards became known as the "Song of the Bow," for the record says that David "bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow." Forgetful of his personal wrongs, David eulogized the king and his son, in beautiful words which bear the ring of sincerest sorrow and affection.

His lament was also politic, for it showed him to the Israelites, not as the enemy but as a member of the house of Saul, and it must have won for him the loyalty of many friends of the royal house. He made no effort to seize the kingdom by force, but was content to wait, as he long had waited, till it should rightfully fall to him.

David reigned about 1000 B. C. Remember that Abraham lived about 2000 B. C., and that the Crusades took place about as many years after Christ as David lived before Christ.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Saul and Jonathan made their last stand against the Philistine army on Mount Gilboa. Bethshan, upon whose town walls the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened, was a Philistine city three miles west of the Jordan, between Gilboa and the Hill of Moreh. Jabesh-gilead was in Gilead across the Jordan, on an isolated, round-topped hill, in full view of Bethshan, if the identification of the site is correct.

From Ziklag, the town south of Beersheba given by the King of Gath, David "went up" to Hebron, fifteen miles south of Bethlehem, three thousand feet above sea level. Hebron was the chief city of the tribe of Judah, and therefore a fitting capital. It is one of the oldest towns in the world, famous in Bible history as the home of Abraham, and the place where Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob were buried. It was assigned to Caleb as a reward for his faithfulness, and it was one of the cities of refuge. Today it is called by the Arabs El-Khalil, the Friend, for "The City of the Friend of God," Abraham. (Assign paragraph 135 of In the Master's Country.)

Ishbosheth had his capital meanwhile, as King of the other tribes of Israel, at Mahanaim, east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: HOW DAVID BECAME KING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Many years have passed since David was called and set apart for the kingship. They have been years of hardship, suffering and persecution; years when hope almost died, and the kingship seemed an impossibility. But the long waiting time is over at last, and David wears the crown that is to be his for forty years to come. How was this happy end to all his troubles brought about?

How David Became King. Through *national disaster.* Saul had gone out to battle against the Philistine, but he was not his old self. He had not the same spirit, he failed in his old military skill, and he lacked confidence in God. His soldiers, too, were not the same men; they had lost confidence in their leader. The result was a bitter defeat. Saul and Jonathan were slain in battle and their army was slaughtered and scattered. It was a great disaster for the nation, but it made the way clear for David.

With Saul dead he could now claim the throne, and the men of his own tribe of Judah proclaimed him their king. This has happened again and again in history. A nation's calamity has been the means of bringing new men to the front and putting them in positions of leadership.

Through the *wickedness of men.* At Saul's death, Abner the captain of Saul's army, placed one of Saul's sons on the throne of Israel, that is, over all the people save the tribe of Judah. For a time Abner served Ishbosheth, this son, faithfully. But when the king chided him for a wrong action, he turned against Ishbosheth and offered to betray his kingdom into the hands of David. Joab, David's captain, distrusted Abner, and because of this as well as because Abner had killed Joab's brother, Joab trapped Abner and slew him. Then two other captains of Ishbosheth crept into the king's house and killed him while he was having a noonday rest. It is all a dreadful story of murder and bloodshed. The men who did it all, while they wanted to serve David, wanted more to serve themselves. But they did not gain anything by wicked deeds. Joab lost David's confidence and the others lost their lives. The only one who gained was David. Through the wickedness of others David came into his own. God has a way of making the evil deeds of men prosper his great purposes.

Through *force of character.* What was David doing all this time, and what was his attitude toward these tragic events? Did he gloat and glory when Saul fell? Not he; he mourned and wept, and said to the men of Jabesh-gilead who had honored Saul in his burial: "Now Jehovah show lovingkindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done

this thing." Did he rejoice when Abner was slain? He praised him, called him a "Prince in Israel," and mourned for him. And when Ishbosheth was murdered he slew his murderers and did honor to the dead king. Through it all he showed himself a generous, big-hearted leader. By his conduct and character he prevented the effects which might have followed the evil that was done. The noble part he played touched the hearts of the people.

Through *the will of the people.* That had been the one thing wanting all along. In Saul's time only a few wanted David to be king. When Saul was dead it was only the tribe of Judah that accepted him, the rest of the nation chose Saul's son. But when Ishbosheth was killed, there came a change. Convinced at last that David was the man, and convinced by events that it was God's will, those who had so long held out against him accepted him as their king, too. So at last he ruled over Israel as well as over Judah, over a United Kingdom. And thus God's will was fulfilled.

Lucky Ted.

That was the nickname they called him by,—
The boys at his school,—and this was why:
He was bound to win from the start, they said:
It was always the way with Lucky Ted!

The earliest flowers in his garden grew;
The sums on his slate came soonest true;
He could sail a boat, or throw a ball,
Or guess a riddle, the best of all.

You wondered what could his secret be,
But watch him a while and you would see.
He thought it out till the thing was plain,
And then went at it with might and main.

Trusting but little to chance or guess,
He learned the letters that spell *Success.*
A ready hand and a thoughtful head—
So much for the "luck" of Lucky Ted!

—Blanche Trennor Heath.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Psalm 66.20.

Luck always befriended him, as she is apt to befriend the capable.—Hugh Clifford.

Let us live in the approval of God, and it shall be well with us forever.—Dr. Alexander McKenzie.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Of what was the ark the symbol to the Israelites? 2. Why do you think David wanted to have the ark in Jerusalem? 3. What wrong method did David employ on his first attempt to have the ark brought to Jerusalem, and what happened? (2 S. 6.3-7 and Num. 4.15.) 4. Where was the ark then left? 5. When the ark was finally brought to the city, how was it honored? 6. How do you think Michal regarded the ark? 7. Could Michal have understood David's holy joy? 8. Read the whole of the 24th Psalm.

Note-Book Work. XV. The Lesson Title; where David had long reigned; how he became king of all Israel; a statement about his nobleness; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE SECRET OF DAVID'S SUCCESS

Suggestions for Beginning the Lesson. See the Historical Background.

One Secret of David's Success. Our word *tact* comes from the Latin *tangere, tactum,* a verb meaning *to touch.* It refers sometimes to a physical faculty, the sense of touch, but more often to a mental faculty, the sensitive mental touch. Webster defines tact as "peculiar skill or faculty; a nice perception or discernment; a ready power of appreciating and doing what is required by circumstances." The right deed that is done at the right time and in the right way is a tactful deed. It is not easy to define tact in a few words but it is easy to illustrate it. In a story about Irish life Miss Barlow has a capital illustration. She is telling about an old woman who has seen better days

and is very proud but who is so poor that she has not enough to eat. Two of her neighbors wish to help her. One brings her some potatoes with the remark that she can not well afford to spare them, but she can not see her neighbor want. The other comes in and borrows a dish and as she thanks her for the favor asks her to try some of her new potatoes. Whose gift do you think the poor woman accepted?

Of all the Old Testament characters from Genesis to Samuel, the most tactful one is David. When the women praised him so as to arouse the king's jealousy, the court would naturally be opposed to him, too, but he behaved himself so wisely that he won the devoted love of Jonathan, the prince, and of all the people. When he was made a captain over the warriors, his popularity increased. When he was hunted from place to place as an outlaw, the disaffected men of the kingdom joined him, and these brave but turbulent companions he kept in check and won their loyal devotion. All who came near him seem to have felt the charm of his personality, and this could only mean that he possessed the "peculiar skill or faculty" called tact in dealing with men.

It is true that deceit often marked his dealings with others, especially in his connection with Achish the king of Gath. Friends and enemies alike he deceived and he made use of falsehood when he thought it would serve him. This was not tact, it was lying, but in our judgment of this sin of his we must not fail to remember that he lived in an age when lying was considered justifiable, even necessary, and a skilful liar lost not in others' esteem.

As we choose to look at it, David's message to the men of Jabesh-gilead may be regarded as a selfish bid for power, or as a genuinely sincere appreciation of their devoted deed, and a tactful presentation of the situation. But surely no one can read his magnificent ode on the death of Saul and Jonathan without being convinced of the depth of David's feeling for them. His love for Jonathan no one can doubt; doubtless he mourned Jonathan's death far more than that of Saul, but he seemed to have forgotten his own wrongs and to have thought of Saul as he once deserved to be thought of. He keenly appreciated the deed of the Jabeshites, and he honestly desired to requite this kindness. It was kind and tactful to tell them so. Tact is largely a matter of thoughtfulness, and this David possessed in a great degree. He was ever on the alert to requite a kindness, whether to Mephibosheth for his father Jonathan's sake, or to Chimham for Barzillai, his father's sake, or to the Jabeshites for Saul's and Jonathan's sakes. He did the right thing in the right way at the right time.

"Sayin' de right thing at de right time am a great gif, but not sayin' anything at de right time am moz ez good an er heap mo' reli'ble," a colored philosopher is reported to have said. One who is thoughtful of others' feelings, will have fewer tactless words to regret than the one who says what he thinks without consideration of the one to whom he says them.

The Main Secrets of David's Success. David's name was handed down in human history as that of the greatest king that Israel ever had. He never could have brought this about but for the fact that he had in his heart faith and hope and love towards God and towards his fellow men. He was a man of deep and genuine piety.

When William IV of England passed away there was a young girl of sixteen named Victoria who was spending the night in Kensington Palace. Word was suddenly brought to her that the King was dead and that she was Queen of England. She immediately fell upon her knees imploring divine help and guidance in the discharge of the high duties which had been thrust upon her. May it not be that this was one secret of her beneficent reign which lasted for more than sixty years? The rulers who begin the ascent of their thrones upon their knees rise high because their eyes are upon that Great White Throne which is the final seat of all authority and of all blessing.

Here then were the leading traits in that young man who became king! In his early life when he was nothing but a shepherd boy he showed fidelity in the ordinary duties of every-day life. He showed courage and high resolve in the presence of danger. He had a fine capacity for joyous and enduring friendship with his brother men. He was great-hearted and magnanimous to his foes, even when he had them utterly in his power. He was a man of simple, genuine faith in the living God.

Whether you are living in Palestine or in Connecticut, in the tenth century

before Christ or in the twentieth century after, are not these the qualities which are sure to be crowned? Are not these the traits which make any man kingly in his bearing and in the whole content of his inner life?

Set your hearts upon those traits and make them your own! Fight the good fight! Keep your faith! Finish your course with honor and you will find at the end of it laid up for you a crown of righteousness, which God gives to every man who serves him aright.—Dean Charles Reynolds Brown, in Five Young Men.

What is Success? Making money is not success. Many men have made it, and are making it today, whose lives have been failures, and who have recognized that their lives were failures. They had money, and they had what money could buy, but they did not have success.

Becoming famous as a doctor, or lawyer, or preacher, may or may not accompany success, but it does not constitute success. Many men rise in their professions who are failures, and many men who are successes are not conspicuously advanced.

Success is two things: character and service,—being and doing what we ought. Whoever becomes, by God's good grace, what he ought in character, and does, by God's loving help, what he ought in service, has made a complete success of life, and the degree of our attainment or shortcoming in this regard measures the degree of our success or failure.

Paul never used the word "success," and never sought the thing. He was ambitious in all things to please Christ. That is the best success.—Condensed from an article in the Sunday School Times by Dr. Robert E. Speer.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.—Booker T. Washington.

The men whom I have seen succeed have always been cheerful and hopeful, who went about their business with a smile on their faces, and took the changes and chances of this mortal life like men.—Kingsley.

"If at first you *do* succeed,
Try again!
Life is more than just one deed;
Try again."

There is no failure more heartbreaking and disastrous than success which leaves God out of the bargain.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

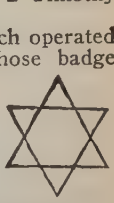
Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was the ark in the house of Obed-edom? (2 S. 6.1-10.) 2. Why did David want the ark in Jerusalem? 3. Why had Saul not brought it up there? 4. Why did David offer sacrifice after the procession had advanced six paces? 5. What did the ark mean to David? 6. What did his dancing before the ark express? 7. How do we express the same feelings? 8. Why is part of the 29th Psalm given in connection with our lesson? 9. What does Lk. 4.16 say concerning Jesus' habit of attending the house of the Lord?

Note-Book Work. Part VI. David's Accession to the Throne of All Israel.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: TRUE SUCCESS AND HOW TO WIN IT

Additional Material: Matthew 25.14-30; 1 Corinthians 9.24-27; 2 Timothy 2.5; 4.1-8.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In the British Army which operated in Palestine during the War there was a Jewish Regiment whose badge was the Shield of David, with the Lion of Judah in the center. This symbol of Judaism, which became so familiar to us during the campaign for raising money for the United War Workers and other charities, is known among the Jews as Magen David. For many centuries it has been placed upon synagogues, and it has been adopted by Zionists. It is a hexagon formed by the combination of two equilateral triangles, and is a singularly expressive geometrical figure. Let us suppose that the outer triangle stands for the throne of Israel superimposed upon the lower triangle, the throne of Judah.



Our outlaw of the last lesson has come into his own; David reaps the reward of his forbearance.

A British Parallel. It is worth whole to notice the striking parallel presented by early English history to the course of events which brought about the union of the tribes under a single sceptre. The invasion of Britain by the English in the fifth and sixth centuries led to the establishment of a number of small, independent kingdoms which were continually weakened by mutual jealousy and strife. Indeed, the warfare between the Britains and the invaders gradually died down into a warfare of English kingdoms against each other. Then came the invasion of the Northmen. The victorious Danes, like the Philistines of Old Testament History, settled down in the midst of the conquered population, which under their dominion was gradually welded into a vigorous nation. The need of resistance to a common foe forced the English to recognize a common king, and towards the close of the ninth century, Ælfred, from being the mere chieftain of the West Saxons, became the king and champion of the united English people in its struggle with the stranger.—R. L. Ottley, in History of the Hebrews.

David Worked for His Success. We have seen David anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel, and then we have seen him very far from the throne, an exile, living in caves or with Israel's enemies, his life ever in danger. What could that anointing by Samuel have meant? If he was called by God to be king, why was the road he had to travel so indirect? David was, to start with, a man after God's own heart, brave and wise and strong of faith, but in the ten years since that first consecration he had learned yet greater humility and patience, trust in God and love for men—even for an enemy—justice and unselfishness and self-control. Bishop F. I. McConnell writing in the Sunday-School Journal, puts the situation very clearly:

The consciousness that he was chosen of the Lord for the Kingdom was no doubt a controlling factor in David's thought. The lesson is important as showing us how we must understand the Lord's guidance of David to the throne. From the standpoint of the sacred writers the anointing at the hands of Samuel did not mean that David was to be carried forthwith to power by a sort of irresistible decree. The decree was indeed given to David, but David had to enforce it. We are not to think of the choice of David by the Lord as some mighty force which was bound to put David on the throne whether David did much or little. The narrator would have us understand that David was to gain the kingship if he did much and not little. So there were the hardships in the wilderness, the life which threw David back upon stern realities after at least a taste of the luxuries of the court. The wild and rough hardship of those outlaw days was a necessary part in training David for the unification of Israel. The consciousness of high destiny served to call forth from David a mightier energy than he would otherwise have known. The Lord's calls are usually like the call of David. They are really calls, that is to say, they are cries of beckoning from far in advance. The one who is called is singled out as of sufficient hardihood to traverse the distance to the One calling.

David Trusted in Jehovah with All His Heart. Throughout his life, David saw God's providence. The first thing he did after virtually acquiring a royal position was to ask counsel of God. His royal administration was begun by prayer. And there was a singular appropriateness in this act. For the great characteristic of David brought out especially in his Psalms, is the reality and nearness of his fellowship with God. We may find other men who equalled him in every other feature of character, but we shall find no one to whom God was so much of a personal Friend, so blended, we may say, with his very existence. David is therefore eminently himself when asking counsel of the Lord. And would not all do well to follow him in this? The great matter is to resemble David in his profound sense of the infinite value and reality of divine direction. Without this your prayers will always be more or less matters of formality. Is it really a profound conviction of yours that in every step of your life God's direction is of supreme value? That you dare not even change your residence with safety without being directed by him? That you dare not enter on new relations in life—new business, new connections, new recreations—without seeking the divine countenance?—Dr. W. S. Blaikie, in Expositor's Bible.

Rules for Attaining Worldly Success. Here are a few of the essential qualities which will win against all the powers of so-called ill luck:

1. Absolute, unswerving integrity. Is that unattainable?

2. Brains, mental grasp. Given a fair mind, what is that but education and discipline?

3. Energy and force of character. This is a question of will to overcome laziness and love of ease.

4. Capacity for work, executive power, the ability to bring things to pass. This is the product of industry by system or method. It is energy conserved and well directed. It is the art of making every stroke count.

5. Personal manners, engaging address. What is this but the result of close, unselfish adherence to the rules for making a gentleman?

All these qualifications are not easy, it is true, but they are not impossible. It is therefore your own choosing whether you will be among the richly rewarded few at the top, or the hungry multitude at the bottom.—Archer Brown.

There are very Different Kinds of Success. There is the success that brings with it the seared soul, the success that is achieved by wolfish greed and vulpine cunning, the success which makes honest men uneasy or indignant in its presence. Then there is the other kind of success, the success that comes as the reward of keen insight, of sagacity, of resolution, of address combined with unflinching rectitude of behavior—public and private. The first kind of success may, in a sense—and a poor sense at that—benefit the individual, but it is always and necessarily a curse to the community; whereas the man who wins the second kind of success, as an incident of its winning, becomes a beneficiary to the whole commonwealth.—Theodore Roosevelt, in an Address before the New York Chamber of Commerce.

The Highest Success. Men and women everywhere are waking up to the fact that service given—not wealth acquired—is the real measure of success. To a company of students who were talking of the honors and the gains they hoped to make through the practice of their chosen profession, an instructor gave the unexpected warning, "Your success is measured, not by what the world gives you, but by what you give the world." Messages like that are becoming more common every year, because of the influence of him who said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," and again, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The highest success is impossible to all who refuse to heed this warning and this appeal of the most successful Man the earth ever can know.—Westminster Adult Bible Class.

Divine Rewards Are Sure. "As far as I can see," Robert said to his father, "real success in life depends not upon goodness, but upon cleverness. Everywhere I see bad men enjoying long-continued prosperity and health and happiness, and conscientious, earnest men and women suffering from poverty and ill health and loneliness and despair. But in what lies the reward for the suffering good man?"

"His reward can never fail," answered his father. "What is the reward for being honest under great temptation? It isn't a little thing like being made governor of a state; it's an infinitely bigger thing. It is that the man becomes *more* honest. The reward of controlling your temper isn't something like a house and lot; it is the reward of having a strong character, perfectly controlled.

"If God should tell us that if we'd be true to our best for a few years, he'd make us enormously rich, we'd try harder, I'm afraid. But God says more than that. He says that if we will be true to our best, we shall grow nobler and stronger and more divine. He will give us not a crown of gold, but a crown of life! Divine rewards and punishments are sure.—Youth's Companion.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. David's "In Memoriam," the Song of the Bow.

2. The two generals, Moab and Abner, and their relations to the two kings.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was the ark in the house of Obed-edom? 2. What directions for moving the ark are given in Num. 4.5, 15; 2. Read the account of the removal of the ark given in 1 Ch. 13; 15; 16. 4. Of what was the ark made? (Ex. 37.) 5. What did it contain? (Dt. 10.5.) 6. What did the ark mean to David? 7. How was dancing regarded at this time? 8. What did David's dancing mean? 9. What is the title of the 24th Psalm? 10. Who are the speakers in the second part of the Psalm? 11. What would happen to your city if all the churches were permanently closed? 12. Why do you go to church?

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

Golden Text

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving
And into his courts with praise. Psalm 100.4

LESSON 2 Samuel 6.1-19; Psalm 24.7-10 DEVOTIONAL READING
1 Chronicles 16.23-31

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Exodus 25.10-22; 2 Samuel 5.6-25; 1 Chronicles 15 and 16; Matthew 6.19-34; Hebrews 9.2-10

2 SAMUEL 6.11 And the ark of Jehovah remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and Jehovah blessed Obed-edom, and all his house.

12 And it was told king David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy. 13 And it was so, that, when they that bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14 And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And it was so, as the ark of Jehovah came into the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before Jehovah; and she despised him in her heart. 17 And they brought in the ark of Jehovah, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before Jehovah. 18 And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Jehovah of hosts. 19 And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to every one a cake of bread, and a portion *of flesh*, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed every one to his house.

PSALM 24.7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
8 Who is the King of glory?
Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
10 Who is this King of glory?
Jehovah of hosts,
He is the King of glory.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

The ARK of JEHOVAH
- Cared for by Obed-Edom
- Carried to Jerusalem
- Celebrated by Offerings

I. THE ARK OF JEHOVAH IN THE HOUSE OF OBED-EDOM, 11-12a. To the Israelites the ark symbolized the Divine Presence, the visible form of an Invisible Power, and David therefore wished to bring it to Jerusalem. His first attempt was unsuccessful (see the Historical Background) and the ark was left in *the house of Obed-edom the Gittite* three months. *And it was told king David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.*

II. DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM WITH GREAT JOY, 12b-16. *And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David* (Jerusalem) *with great joy.* Read the account in 1 Ch. 15 and 16. The requirements of the law were fulfilled this time and the ark was in charge of the Levites: compare the method of procedure on the first occasion, verses 1-11. They were going up to Jerusalem, along a steep, winding ascent, and *they bare the ark,* carried it on their shoulders, a much easier way, probably, than to bring it up in a cart; moreover, the fate of Uzzah was still in their minds. When they *had gone six paces,* and nothing had happened, they were confident that "God helped the Levites that bare the ark," 1 Ch. 15.24, and they could surely bring it into the city, and David therefore *sacrificed an ox and a fatling,* as a thank offering that God was giving his sanction to the enterprise. *The fatling* could have been any fatted animal: seven rams are specified in 1 Ch. 15.26.

And David danced before Jehovah—before the ark which symbolized the presence of Jehovah—*with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.* The *linen ephod* was the dress of the priest, and David was taking the part of the priest in leading the procession, arranging the sacrifice, and blessing the people (verse 18). Over the linen ephod he wore a robe of fine linen, 1 Ch. 15.27, which he threw off in the course of his dancing. "The word translated *danced* seems to mean *whirled,* as in the devotional dancing of the dervishes"(Smith). Women were the usual dancers on such occasions of public rejoicings, but David's intense joy and enthusiasm led him to take part himself in the dancing.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. With shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psal-

Procession of Musicians and Clappers

teries and harps, 1 Ch. 15.38. Compare the later occasion when the ark was brought into the temple that Solomon built, 2 Ch. 5.12, 13.

When *Michal, the daughter of Saul*—born to the purple, as we might say—looked out at the window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before Jehovah, *she despised him in her heart.* David forgot his crown that was his as king; he forgot his spear that was his as warrior; he remembered only that he was a man rejoicing in his Maker, and he gave way to his emotions and danced, to the surprise of his people perhaps, to the scorn of his wife, certainly. The

recording of the event teaches that there is a rightful place in life for the emotions.

III. THE CELEBRATION IN JERUSALEM, 17-19. The ark was set *in the midst of the tent, that David had pitched for it.* The tabernacle was at Gibeon. *And David offered burnt-offerings,* which typified the self-dedication of the worshippers; *and peace-offerings,* which were sacrifices of thanksgiving. After blessing the people, *he dealt among all, even among the whole multitude, to every one a cake of bread, and a portion of flesh, and a cake of raisins.* "This was a generous treat rather than a distribution of alms: the great men, it was probable, he entertained at his own house, but for the multitude, men, women (and children, says Josephus) he probably ordered provision to be made at their respective quarters, and this he did in token of his joy and gratitude to God"(Matthew Henry).

IV. A MAJESTIC CHORUS OF PRAISE, Ps. 24.7-10. The title of the 24th Psalm reads: "The King of Glory Entering Zion. A Psalm of David." The second part describes the entrance of Jehovah, the King of Glory, into the city, seemingly at the head of a victorious army, and is most appropriate for this occasion, the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem. We may think of the procession chanting the didactic choral, the first part of the Psalm, verses 1-6, as they wind their way up to the city of Zion, and stopping at the gates and listening to the triumphal chorus of the second part. Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in The Life of David, gives this sympathetic interpretation of the second part:

The procession has reached the front of the ancient city on the hill, and stands before the very walls and weatherbeaten gates which Melchizedek may have passed through, and which had been barred against Israel till David's might had burst them. National triumph and glad worship are wonderfully blended in the summons which rings from the lips of the Levites without; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye doors (that have been from of oid)," as if even their towering portals were too low, "and the King of glory shall come in."

Then, with a wonderful dramatic force, a single voice from within the barred gates asks, like some suspicious warder, "Who is the King of glory?" With what a shout of proud confidence and triumphant memories of a hundred fields comes, ready and full, the crash of many voices in answer, "Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle!" How vividly the reluctance of an antagonistic world to yield to Israel and Israel's King, is represented in the repetition of the question in a form slightly more expressive of ignorance and doubt, in answer to the reiterated summons, "Who is this King of glory?" With what deepened intensity of triumph there peals, hoarse and deep, the choral shout, "Jehovah of Hosts, he is the King of glory." That name which sets him forth as sovereign of the personal and impersonal forces of the universe—angels and stars, and terrestrial creatures, all gathered in ordered ranks, embattled for his service—was a comparatively new name in Israel, and brought with it thoughts of irresistible might in earth and Heaven. It crashes like a catapult against the ancient gates; and at that proclamation of the omnipotent name of the God which dwells with men, they grate back on their brazen hinges, and the ark of the Lord enters its rest.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

David danced before Jehovah with all his might, verse 14. Dancing grew out of an innate disposition, and even need, in the man of primitive society to express emotion, or accomplish purpose in regulated bodily movements. It must have been communal man who began it, because, until there was such a thing, a thought or need of synchronous movement was not likely to arise. At the bottom of synchronous movement lies sympathy, and sympathy presupposes plurality. It is in harmony with this impulse, that in the earliest stages of civilization the world over the dance became religious. That is its status amongst the civilized peoples of antiquity when we first read of them, and that is its status among the savages and semi-civilized peoples of today.

Even after the introduction of Christianity, dancing continued for centuries to be an element of religious worship among those who had espoused the new religion, as it had been a feature of the Greek mysteries and the Egyptian and Hebrew festivals. In some of the ancient churches of Rome there is still to be

seen a raised floor at which first at festivals but eventually every Sunday the priests performed their dances, led by the Bishop, who as leader of the dance was called "Præsul." In France, the custom of dancing in the churches endured till its legal prohibition in 1667; it still survives as an annual ceremony at the cathedral in Seville.—H. C. Krehbiel, in N. Y. Tribune.

If one goes to the synagogues on the feast of "Simhass Torah," held in commemoration of the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai, old men that have passed the century mark, will be seen carrying the roll of the Pentateuch, and dancing as blithely as their weary and stiffened limbs will permit. In time of war, dances are seen among the victorious, where they wield swords, spears, and other weapons; while hopping to the tune of music.—Gamahliel Wad-el-Ward, in Palestine through the Eyes of a Native.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In this lesson we see the Lord as King: in what aspect did we see him in an earlier Psalm? In the lesson about David and Goliath, in whose name did David say he came? (Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.) What have we heard about the ark being taken into battle? (Lesson VI of Second Quarter.)

David and the Philistines. Before the ark could be brought to Jerusalem David must have been firmly settled on his throne. It is impossible to determine the chronological order of the events of David's reign, but certainly his defensive and offensive wars with the Philistines must have first taken place, and probably his wars of conquest as well, before there came a time of rest in which he could turn his attention to his capital and to the ark. Many scholars place the events of chapters 10, 11, 12 and 8 before those of 6, 7 and 9.

As soon as the Philistines learned that David had captured the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem, and united the Northern Kingdom with the Southern, they became aware that David was no longer a petty chieftain whose power they need not fear, and they "went out against him." Three combats with the Philistines near Gibeon are recorded, where they were so thoroughly routed that we never again hear of their troubling the Israelites.

David's Conquests. David fills a larger space in Hebrew history than any other one save only Moses and Christ. Later generations looked back to him as the model King. By conquest he extended his empire from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, making the Philistines on the west and the Edomites, Moabites, Aramæans and others east of the Jordan pay tribute to him. Even the King of Hamath on the Orontes sent him presents (2 S. 8.9-11). Towards the north David's rule extended as far as the Lebanons. On the northwest King Hiram of Tyre concluded with David a friendly alliance. On the south was the desert.

The Fate of the Ark. In the time of Eli the ark was taken into battle and captured by the Philistines (Lesson VI of the Second Quarter). The Philistines placed it first in the house of their god Dagon in Ashdod, then sent it to Gath, and then to Ekron. Grievous afflictions befell the people of every city to which it was taken, and the Philistines in terror put it on a new cart and sent it to the Israelites of Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh were smitten for looking into the ark, which was contrary to the law, and they sent to the men of Kiriath-jearim to come and get it. It was brought into the house of Abinadab, and Eleazer, his son, was sanctified to keep it.

The First Attempt at Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. We hear nothing further about the ark until David decided to have it brought to Jesrusalem. At the head of a great procession of chosen men of Israel he went to Kiriath-jearim (Baale-judah) for it. The ark was placed on a new cart and the oxen were driven by Uzzah and Ahio, of the family of Abinadab. Joyously the procession moved along its way to Jerusalem, David exulting with the rest and keeping time to the music of harps and psalteries, timbrels and castanets and cymbals. But their joy suddenly turned to grief and fear, for when the oxen stumbled Uzzah put his hand upon the ark to steady it, and "God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God." His sudden death was considered by the people a vindication of the sacredness of God, and it taught the duty of reverential care for the ark, the symbol of God. Angry at himself, probably, for his failure to have the ark borne according to the law

(Num. 4), and afraid to have it taken into Jerusalem, David had it carried aside to the house of Obed-edom. There it had remained three months, and Obed-edom and all his household had been blessed by its presence.

David as a Musician. The music of ancient Israel attained its highest development during the lifetime of King David. He it was who arranged the various orders of musicians and singers for the service in the temple to be erected by his son Solomon (1 Ch. 15). There were four thousand Levites in the orchestra and choir directed by two hundred and eighty leaders. Many of the Psalms indicate that they were written for an orchestra and choir.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The ark had long rested at Kiriath-jearim, twelve miles from Jerusalem on the border between Judah and Benjamin. David brought the ark first as far as Perez-Uzzah (the breach of Uzzah) and then it was taken aside into Obed-edom's house. After three months it was brought to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, the city of David, was originally the fortress of Jebus. On the Tell-el-Amarna tablets it is called Ura-Salim, and it is therefore thought that the Israelites restored to it an ancient name. David strengthened his capital by building a new wall (1 Ch. 11.7-9), and erected for himself a palace of stone and cedar. To make it the national center of his kingdom, it must also possess a national sanctuary, and become the center of the worship of God. At this time the tabernacle was in one city, the ark in another, and both were neglected. The tabernacle had long been in Shiloh, but perhaps for a part of the time it was at Nob. The ark was at Kiriath-jearim. There were two high priests, Abiathar, the sole survivor of Saul's massacre of the priests at Nob, who had joined David when he was in the cave of Adullam; and Zadok at Shiloh, who had been with Saul and with Ish-bosheth before David was made king of all Israel. David retained both high priests, had a temporary tent prepared at Jerusalem for the reception of the ark, until he could carry out his cherished purpose of erecting a temple for its abode, and then summoned the people for a great religious procession to bring the ark up to the capital.

Assign paragraph 119 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

David's dancing was the expression of his zeal and joy and enthusiasm upon that great occasion when the sacred ark was being brought to the capital. David was whole-hearted in all that he did, he threw his whole soul into every undertaking. Is there anyone who more than a Sunday-school teacher needs these same qualities—whole-hearted zeal for his work, enthusiasm for his theme, and joy in his teaching? You can't make the most of your opportunity with your class if you are not throwing your whole soul into it; you can't arouse your pupils to a realization of their obligation to the Lord if you are not yourself alive to these obligations; you cannot serve humanity well if you don't get any joy out of your service.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE ARK OF GOD BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The ark had been lying in an obscure man's house for forty years. That did not seem right to David. It seemed to be neglected. He thought it ought to be in the center of things, easily accessible to all the people. He wanted it, too, in the city where his throne was. And he determined to carry out his desire.

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. David's purpose sprang out of his devotion to God. His purpose was good, but he used at first *a wrong method.* High purposes do not save a man from wrong means. You can run a church bazaar or a Sunday-school class in the wrong way. That was the mistake which David and his friends made. After much thought they arranged to have the ark put upon a new cart and thus brought into the city of Jerusalem. But the law was that it should always be carried by the priests. But the fact was that it was so long since the ark had been moved that they had forgotten all about the right way, and did not trouble to look up their sacred records and find out.

They had a good start with the ark and all went well for a time. But when they drew near to the place where they were to stop for their noonday meal, the oxen began to hurry, the ark threatened to fall off the cart, and one of the men put out his hand to save it. As he did so, he fell down dead. This put a stop to the enterprise. David seemed to think that God was angry with him, and so gave up his purpose and went home. But he was quite mistaken. God does not intend us to regard difficulties and obstacles as signs that he is against them. They are not there to drive us back, but to call out the best there is in us, and inspire us to persevere.

Three months passed before David found out his mistake. Then he learned that the ark had brought blessing upon Obed-edom's house where it had been left. He knew then that God was not angry with him, and he renewed his enterprise. This time all went well. The ark reached the city amid the shouting, rejoicing crowds. The musicians were playing, the choir was singing, and David in his enthusiasm sang and danced at the head of the procession. How do you feel when you hear merry music? Don't you want to sing, and jump about? When the organ is played in church, how solemn and quiet you feel! When the band marches along playing national airs, how patriotic and brave! They had strange instruments of music in the days we are studying, and their playing made every one rejoice. Yet David's wife Michal watching from a window of the palace frowned upon David. She did not understand his love and reverence for the ark, she had no sympathy with his purpose in bringing it to Jerusalem, and she could not understand his great rejoicing. So she mocked him, "despised him in her heart." It is possible to make fun of anything; the fun and the scorn depend less upon the object than upon our attitude toward it. If the scornful spirit be within us, it will not be difficult to find something in any House of God at which to direct our words of scorn.

We have a beautiful Psalm which the procession may have chanted as it approached the gate of the city with the sacred ark. What is the number of the Psalm? Let us read it together, half of you asking the questions, and the other half responding.

The enterprise was finished at last. The ark was at rest in the tent which had been prepared for it. Then followed worship and sacrifice. Good things were distributed to the people, and they returned to their homes happy and content. David, I think, slept well, too, that night. The symbol of God's presence was in the city and all was well.

It was not always given to David to carry out a great purpose so swiftly. Nor is it to men of today. Many who have started good things have not lived long enough to see them succeed. But of this we may be sure that no purpose which honors God and means the good of men ever fails. Delays and hindrances, enemies and obstacles, may be many. The one who initiates the undertaking may pass away, but others carry it on to a splendid finish.

A Song of God's House.

Glad in the House of God,
  Upon his holy day,
We lift our hearts in song,
  His wondrous praises say;
And while we sing, he hears,
  And when the song is done,
Oh, very, very near he seems
  To every listening one.

Low in the House of God
  Upon his peaceful day,
With bended heads we kneel
  Our earnest prayers to say;
And while we pray, he hears,
  And close, so close he comes,
That all the way he walks with us
  Back to our happy homes. —Nancy Byrd Turner.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Psalm 24.7-10.

As a Father, Friend and Savior, God wants his children's love and hymns and prayers.—David Swing.

Reverence is treating worthy things worthily, and the most worthy things the most worthily.—James G. K. McClure.

Never treat lightly anything which is sacred to others.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whose friendship had been one of the happiest things in David's life? 2. What had Jonathan done for David? 3. What did David promise he would do for Jonathan as told in 1 S. 20.14, 15? 4. When did he carry out this promise? 5. How did he learn about Mephibosheth? 6. How did Mephibosheth happen to be a cripple? (2 S. 4.4.) 7. What did David do for him? 8. Why? 9. Did this kindness cost David anything? 10. What do boy scouts promise to do every day? 11. Has everyone every day an opportunity of being kind?

Note-Book Work. XVI. The Lesson Title; what the ark meant to David; how he honored it; what our church means to us; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: WHAT THE ARK MEANT TO ISRAEL, Or, THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Additional Material: Exodus 25.10-22; Hebrews 9.2-10.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. David is now king over all Israel. What are some of the things that he will do as king? He will wage successful warfare with the enemies of his country, especially with the Philistines, and with God's help will make his people free and powerful and happy; he will be a just judge; and he will take care to have God honored and worshipped and obeyed in all his land. To the Israelites what was the symbol of God's presence? On what occasion was the ark borne into battle and captured? Where had it been since then? Why did David want to have it brought to Jerusalem?

What the Ark Meant to Israel. See the next Topic.

What the Church Means to a Christian. "Why should I go to Church?" a young girl asked her grandfather.

The grandfather was silent a moment, and then he said: "Tell me, child, has the piano-tuner been here yet? you said that the piano needed tuning."

"No, I am still waiting for him, the piano needs tuning sadly. I tried to play last evening, but my playing was a dismal failure."

"Now see, my child, our souls are like a musical instrument," then said the grandfather. "The strings become slack and out of tune very quickly, they must be tuned up from time to time."

"What do you mean, grandfather?"

"All strings—goodness, faith, courage, generosity, reverence, love—all grow less vibrant in us, without our knowing it even. But when we hear the Gospel proclaimed at church we see how we have lost tune. We are tuned up once more to what is the true pitch of righteousness. But the tuning does not last. And so one must go regularly to church to have one's soul tuned aright."

The Call to Worship. Is it not an uplifting thought that we are embraced in that great fellowship which, under various names the whole world over, is engaged in the worship and service of our common Lord? In great cathedrals, in frontier churches by the cross-roads, and under the banyan trees in pagan lands, they are bending in devotion to him.

And what of those who abide without? Is it not a dreary thing to stand alone in the great struggle? To feel that you have no part nor lot in this great brotherhood, this coöperative guild of prayer and sympathy? The Ancient Mariner speaks of his many weary years of wandering thus:

O wedding guest! This soul hath been
Alone, on a wide, wide sea,
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

But the days of his loneliness are over. He has found the pleasant companionship of God's people and with it strength and comfort unspeakable:

O, sweeter than the marriage-feast
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the kirk
With the goodly company!

—David James Burrell, in The Spirit of the Age.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. There is in my heart a little plant called Reverence which wants to be watered about once a week.—Holmes.

I love the habitation of thy house.—David.

The Church in the world is a constant reminder of the presence of God among men; the meeting-house is a symbol of the Church and calls to worship: the Sabbath bell is an invitation to all men to come together as children of the Father of us all and unite in listening to his word and voicing common worship and praise.—Harris T. Farwell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What can you recall of the friendship of David and Jonathan? 2. What special promise did David make to Jonathan in regard to his family? (1 S. 20. 13-16.) 4 How old was Mephibosheth at his father's death? 5. Of what was Mephibosheth afraid when David summoned him to court? 6. What does 1 K. 15.29; 16.11 show was sometimes the custom in regard to a predecessor's household? 7. What does Is. 32.8 say the kingly or the noble one does?

Note-Book Work. Part VII. David Honors the Ark.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE ATTITUDE TO INSTITUTIONS OF RELIGION

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. To understand this narrative we must keep in mind the history of the ark, its treatment during the rule of Eli and Saul, and the need in David's time for showing the people that it was a sacred object and must be revered. Neither Saul nor any of the priests had shown any interest in it. "It may have seemed profaned by its stay in the enemy's land; moreover, the indifferent military success that it had brought the hosts of Israel at Aphek had probably shaken their faith in it. It was otherwise with David; he was not alarmed by the superstitious scruples of Saul and his age. He saw in the ark what it really was, and what he himself needed; the ancient shrine of Israel, which had guaranteed the presence of Jehovah in the wilderness, and with which great memories were connected."

The Reason for David's Attitude to the Ark. The Ark was but wood overlaid with gold, but it was to David and all true Israelites a wonderful symbol. It stood for God's presence with them; it stood for everything they meant when they called themselves God's chosen nation; it stood for their religion.

We can bring home to us the thought of what it meant by these words of Dr. Charles E. Jefferson concerning the power of symbols:—

As soon as war was declared everybody believed in symbolism. Flags were immediately displayed. The streets of all our great cities were aflutter with them. The flag seemed to express more than it was possible to declare either in song or in speech. Patriotism loves to appeal to the eye as well as to the ear. Every spirit in the soul of man is fed by sights and sounds. The human heart is naturally fond of symbols. But men have been talking in many quarters against the foolishness of symbols. They have laughed at baptism as a foolish rite, and have steadfastly refused to participate in a ceremony so meaningless as that of the Lord's Supper. Of what value, men have asked, can be a few drops of water on the head, and of what significance can be a crumb of bread and a sip of wine? Such questions are asked by those who do not understand the power of symbols, and the place they have in the evolution of the moral life of mankind. But every patriot knows the value of a symbol when that symbol takes the shape of his nation's flag. It is only silk or cotton to the man who does not love his country, but to the heart that is patriotic that flag ceases to be silk or cotton, it becomes the symbol of all that is most glorious in his nation's soul.

David's Warmth and Michal's Coldness. Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw king David leaping and dancing before Jehovah; and she despised him in her heart. Michal had no reverence for sacred things. She could not understand David's love and reverence and zeal for the sacred ark. To her cold nature David's enthusiastic expression of his joy was incomprehensible. What she could not understand she hesitated not to condemn.

Are we, perhaps, "too tame" in our worship? Dr. George Clarke Peck thinks some of us are. "Measured by our ideals," he writes, "the tribute of the first Palm Sunday was pathetically meager. Yet, meager as it was, it was far too

extravagant for certain contemporary churchmen. As such men always do, they questioned the good taste of the affair. They were masters of decorums and proprieties. They knew how to measure enthusiasm in gills and inches. They cried out against excitement. Jesus's reply has not yet grown old: "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, even the stones would cry out." We are too tame, too absurdly proper, too disquietingly quiet. If our sires sang too loud, we err in the opposite direction. We have grown afraid of hosannas and waving palm-branches. When our Lord enters a city or an institution, or a heart, that entry is wonderful enough to justify acclamation. Perhaps, if we should let ourselves go occasionally, with the zeal of the Kingdom, we might help remind our neighbors that the King is approaching."

The Present-Day Attitude to the Church of God. What the ark and sacrifice before it stood for to the people of Israel, that the Church and its institutions stand for to the men and women of today.

In his book entitled Old Truths and New Facts, Dr. Charles Jefferson describes the general attitude to the Church in our generation as censorious. For fifty years, he declares, the Church has been exposed to a criticism more general and biting than it had been called upon to endure since the first centuries of its career. The condemning judgment has swept across the world like a deluge. There are many thousands of church members even who have no zeal for their church, and who have come to doubt altogether the value of church membership.

Dr. Jefferson finds encouragement in the fact that when the war broke out the masses of men felt aggrieved because the Church had not come up to their expectations. "Why did not the Church prevent it?" they asked. "What has the Church been doing? What is the Church for if it can not ward off a catastrophe like this?" Nobody inquired what has Science, Education, Art, Philosophy, Reason, Common Sense, been doing. No one went in pursuit of any other agency or institution than the Christian Church. This arraignment was a beautiful testimony to the faith in the Church of God which lies deep rooted in the heart of our Western world.

Dr. Jefferson calls attention to the fact that during the war the whole world learned to extol *the principles of the Christian Church.* One could not pick up a paper without reading in the editorial columns one or another of the commonplaces of the Christian pulpit. We were told that we must not think of convenience or comfort, we must put duty first. Personal safety was not a matter of the first concern. Financial greed was an ugly and degrading thing. Men who loved money more than they loved mankind, and who sacrificed the interests of the nation in order to put money in their purse, were called profiteers,, and it is an odious term. Money must never be put first. The Christian Church has proclaimed that from the beginning.

We were told that we were all under the law of service. It was our duty to help the Belgians, and the Servians, and the Poles, and the Armenians, and the French.

We were told that we must not rate life too highly. We must not fear death. We must keep death in its proper place. Physical life is not too great a price to pay for noble principles, and for the freedom and happiness of human homes. There are times when men must lay down their lives for others.

In short, the non-churchgoing, non-Christian world came to see in those days of war that the fundamental principles of the Christian faith are nothing more or less than the principles of all wholesome and victorious life.

Moreover, the war has helped us to see how sorely the world needs an institution whose supreme business is feeding the springs of good will. There is no doubt as to the mission of the Christian Church. Its mission is written large across the pages of the New Testament. It exists to establish, not in some other world but in this one, the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy. Its fundamental doctrine is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. We cannot get on without an institution whose supreme business is to bind human hearts together, and make war on those sentiments and dispositions which drive communities and nations apart.

The war, then, did not prove that the Church of Christ is not needed in our modern world; it proved that we need it desperately. It demonstrated that we cannot get on without it. Instead of tossing the Church aside because the world tumbled into a ditch, we must cling to the Church with a new devotion, and

pour into it a fuller measure of our strength and love. It is not a lesser Church but a greater Church which humanity is crying out for.

The Effect of the Attitude of Parents to the Church. The simplest thing which fathers and mothers can do for the direct religious welfare of their children is to attend church on Sunday. The neglect of such attendance suggests at once to the logical mind of the child that the institutions of religion are not highly prized by their parents. The zeal and punctuality with which such parents may insist upon the appearance of the children at Sunday-school or at church count for little, in the face of this inconsistency; the meaning is that the institutions of religion are mainly good for children; or, if the mother goes to church and not the father, that they are for children and women. The boys look forward to the time when, being men like their fathers, they may stay at home as they do.—Dean Hodges.

Enter into his Gates with Thanksgiving, and into his Courts with Praise. As the opening strains of the voluntary, delicate as the first breath of morning wind across the grasses, rose softly from the organ, a tired, plainly dressed woman looked up with shining eyes. She did not know what it was—she knew nothing of music by name—but she loved it so! It always seemed like a strong, wonderful hand, loosening all her worries and anxieties. She had longed for it so this particular morning that she had almost prayed for it, only she was afraid that it was not a thing she had a right to pray about. She—

"I saw Jennie Andrews downtown yesterday. She said she was getting better, but she really does look dreadfully. I think it's old-fashioned consumption, myself. Four of her family—"

Across the tired woman's face swept a look of consternation. Mrs. James Harvey had come in and was leaning forward, talking to a friend in the pew in front; her penetrating whisper rasped across the exquisite chords with utter unconsciousness.

"You know Jim Andrews went out West three years ago; nobody knew exactly what it was all about; they hushed things up, but everybody knows there was something queer about it. And now, they say—"

A girl in the next pew lifted her head despairingly, revealing dark, troubled eyes. She had come in to try to get help on her hard problem. She felt that, somehow, with people praying about her, she might reach something—some one—she was not sure what. Only—she did so need help! But pray—with that voice in her ears!

"I know. That's just what I tell people. Of course, it all depends upon your point of view, and I am the last one in the world to make trouble. But there are plenty of people ready to. That's why I refuse to be authority for anything unless I know. I always say, 'Don't quote *me*—I'm only telling what I heard.'"

A young man a couple of pews in front glanced back, curiously. He had not cared about coming, but he could not very well get out of it when Dr. Kincaid pinned him down and told him it was not fair not to give church a trial. But if that was what Christians called reverence!

The voluntary swept into the doxology and the congregation arose. The great tide of praise filled the church.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," Mrs. James Harvey sang with the rest. If anyone had told her that she had failed in worship she would have been hotly indignant. Did she not always "take part"?—Youth's Companion.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. David's and Michal's attitude; enthusiasm and coldness in religion; revivals and conventional services; the place of emotion in religion. See editorial in The Christian Work, Jan. 26, 1918.

2. What does your church stand for?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What statements are made in 1 S. 20.11-17 and 24.20-22 that seem to prepare the way for the incident of this lesson? 2. Are Mephibosheth's obeisance and his words in verse 8 in accord with oriental custom? 3. Why is the statement about David's having Mephibosheth eat at his table four times repeated? 4. What help did Solomon secure in building the temple from a man who did it because of his love for David, Solomon's father? (1 K. 5.1.) 5. How does Christ's parable of the Last Judgment teach that one may repay the kindnesses of God? (Mt. 25.31-46.) 6. What elements of strength have we seen in David's character?

THE KINGLY KINDNESS OF DAVID

Golden Text

David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people. 2 Samuel 8.15

LESSON 2 Samuel 8.15; 9.1-13 DEVOTIONAL READING Colossians 3.12-17

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Deuteronomy 28.1-14; Psalm 78.70-72; 1 Samuel 24.1-7; 2 Samuel 1.17-27

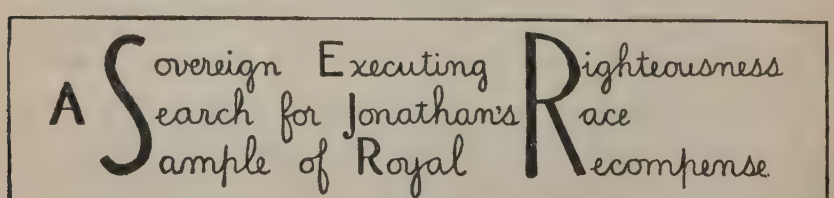
2 SAMUEL 8.15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.

9.1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? 2 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him unto David; and the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. 3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, who is lame of his feet. 4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. 5 Then king David sent and fetched him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. 6 And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and fell on his face, and did obeisance. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! 7 And David said unto him, Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. 8 And he did obeisance, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?

9 Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I given unto thy master's son. 10 And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in *the fruits,* that thy master's son may have bread to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king,* he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. 12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. 13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. DAVID'S JUST REIGN, verse 8.15.

II. DAVID'S SEARCH FOR JONATHAN'S FAMILY, verses 9.1-5. The tragedy that befell Saul's house is summed up in that pathetic question of David's, *Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?* It recalls Samuel's

solemn words to Saul: "Thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God; now thy kingdom shall not continue." David wished to find some one to whom he might show kindness for Jonathan's sake. Recall the covenant that David made with Jonathan, 1 S. 20.14-17, 42. Learning that one of Saul's servants, *Ziba* by name, was living, David sent for him and inquired about Saul's family. He hoped to find a representative, that he might *show the kindness of God unto him.* See 2 S. 20.14. David would show such "kindness and mercy as God shows to men, unfailing, unsought, unlimited. Compare Lk. 6.36." There was a son of Jonathan's yet living, Ziba told the king, and he *is lame of his feet.* See 2 S. 4.4. *Where is he,* asked the king. *In the house of Machir.* It was this Machir who afterwards welcomed David when the latter was forced to flee because of his own son's rebellion, 2 S. 17.27-29. At once *king David sent and fetched him.*

III. THE KINGLY KINDNESS OF DAVID, 9.6-15. *Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, came unto David, and fell on his face, and did obeisance.* See Light from Oriental Life. *And David said unto him, Fear not.* "How like a parable of the love of God is this story!" exclaims G. H. Morrison. "You and I, impoverished and maimed, and under sentence of rejection like the house of Saul, are sought out, individually, by the great love of Jesus. And we are afraid, when we first come face to face with him, and then we hear him saying to us 'Fear not,' and then he restores our forfeited inheritance, and takes us into rich communion with himself. All this God does for lost and helpless men; all this is the working of his wonderful grace. I can never hear the name of Mephibosheth but immediately I fall a-thinking of myself." *I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake,* continued David, *and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father.* David promised to give all Saul's private property. Saul was Mephibosheth's grandfather, but the word *father* is often used in the sense of *ancestor. And thou shalt eat bread at my table continually,* David added. The restoring of Saul's property to Saul's descendant was justice; the admitting of that descendant to David's own table I might call a work of supererogation. David might well have been content with restoring the estates and appointing Ziba and his household as servants of Mephibosheth. This would have been showing the latter abundant kindness, but it would have cost David little. Something of himself must go with the gift, there must be a personal element in it, in order to have it a kindness for Jonathan's sake. At a time when high stature and great physical strength were deemed important attributes of a king, there may have been even some sacrifice in having a cripple always at the king's table. The emphasis which the narrative itself puts upon this act of David's, in that it is four times mentioned, shows its importance. "It is not written, Blessed is he that feedeth the poor, but, he that considereth the poor" (Ruskin). With the most abject humility, in a genuinely oriental way, Mephibosheth accepted the honor, saying, *What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?* David called Ziba, and after telling him what he had done bade him and his household serve Mephibosheth.

Oriental Modes of Salutation

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Mephibosheth fell on his face and did obeisance, verse 6. It seems to have been common to show different degrees of respect to different persons according to their rank and importance by bending the body in a greater or less measure. Simply to bow down the head was an expression of mere common civility; to curve the body low down, signified a considerable degree of reverence; to throw it entirely down, with the face upon the ground, was an act of the greatest homage.—Nevin, in Biblical Antiquities.

David said unto him, Fear not, verse 7. Evidently David felt the need of reassuring Mephibosheth that his life was in no danger, that he had not brought

him from his retreat in Lo-debar to put him to death as a survivor of Saul and therefore a possible rival to his throne. It very frequently happened in Eastern countries that a founder of a new dynasty put to death all possible "Pretenders" belonging to the previous reigning house. In chapter 21 of 2 Samuel we are told that David spared Mephibosheth, but had seven others of Saul's descendants put to death at Gibeah, to avenge the Gibeonites who had suffered at the hands of Saul. When Abimelech, the son of Jerrubbaal, succeeded in having himself made king at Shechem in the days of the Judges, he put to death all his brethren save Jotham whom he could not find (Judges 9.1-6). The history of the northern kingdom contains accounts of many murders of kinsmen of rivals.

A dead dog, verse 8. The strongest devisable hyperbole in Eastern lands of unworthiness and degradation; for in a dead dog the vileness of a corpse is added to the vileness of a dog.—Kitto.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When did David and Jonathan first meet? What covenant did they make together? What kindnesses did Jonathan show David? What opportunities did David have for showing special kindness to Jonathan? How did Jonathan meet his death?

Mephibosheth, Jonathan's Son. On the day after the battle of Mount Gilboa, news was brought to the royal family of the death of Saul and Jonathan, the victory of the Philistines, and their approach upon Gibeah. A nurse seized Mephibosheth, the five year old son of Jonathan, in her arms and started to flee from the place, but in her excitement she let the lad fall. He was picked up a helpless cripple, both feet being injured, and was taken across the Jordan. For many years he lived in the house of Machir in Lo-debar. At the time of this lesson he had a son named Mica. If David remembered his debt to Jonathan soon after his accession to the throne of all Israel, this statement must have been added here "in anticipation": if the event of to-day's lesson occurred after David's wars of conquest, then Mephibosheth was old enough to have a son at that time.

Places. Lo-debar, where Ish-bosheth was living, was across the Jordan, probably not far from Mahanaim, where his uncle, Ishbaal, had his court while king of the northern tribes. The scene of the lesson is at David's palace in Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There is one sin which is at the root of all the suffering caused by others—selfishness. And there is one virtue which is at the root of all the happiness wrought by others—kindness. If you inculcate in your pupils unselfishness and kindness, you do much to make the world in which they live a better world.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: DAVID'S KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Success did not spoil David. What does the first verse of our text say about him? "He executed justice and righteousness unto all his people." When he had secured peace for his realm his thoughts went back to Jonathan, that noble friend who had stood by him so loyally in his early troubles, and to the covenant the two had made. He had vowed that as long as he lived he would be kind to Jonathan's house. What steps did he take to carry out his promise? How did he learn about Mephibosheth?

David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son. It almost seems as though David might have tried to do something for Jonathan's son years before this. But there are some excuses for him. He had been very busy putting his kingdom in order, his enemies had plunged him into war after war and had left him little time for anything but warfare. But when his enemies were crushed and his kingdom settled, he set to work to redeem his promise. And he did it in a royal way. To Mephibosheth, he gave all the lands of his father Jonathan and an honored place in the royal household. Do not think that this was an easy thing for David to do. Probably he had been getting the income from those

lands and to do it meant to deny himself. Then Saul's heir at the court might be a source of danger. He might become the center of a conspiracy against David. Don't you think there may have been more than one to suggest this to David and point out how foolishly he was acting? And then Mephibosheth was lame in both feet, and it may not have seemed pleasant to everyone to have a cripple always at the royal table. But David brushed aside all difficulties and kept his word. Often it is very hard to keep a promise, but a true man's word is as good as his bond.

What a change for Mephibosheth! All these years he had not been having a good time. When he was five years old his nurse had taken him in her arms to run away with him and save him from danger, but she stumbled and fell and the little fellow was so hurt by the accident that he never recovered from it. He could not do anything, and had been living with one of his father's or grandfather's servants, dependent probably upon him for everything. And now he who had been so poor became a wealthy landowner; he who had been so obscure sat at the king's table. Do such things happen to people now? Sometimes. But the boy who waits for a wealthy relative to die and leave him his property and doesn't do anything to help himself is a pretty poor specimen of humanity.

Why did David do all this for Mephibosheth? For Jonathan his father's sake. The son received all this kindness because of what his father had been, because of his father's love and kindness to David. It is a wonderful thing to have a father whose character and goodness have won the admiration and affection of men. The best capital many a boy has when he starts in life is his father's good name and character. Such a father deserves the right kind of son.

Kindness for a Son's Sake. In the Civil War I have heard that a New York merchant helped every youth that might come to him wearing the uniform of his son's regiment. This he had, however, to stop. On one occasion, however, a young man walked into his office, and at first met with a blunt refusal. But the youth produced a note which he handed to the merchant. It was something like the following: "The bearer of this note has come home to die. He has been fighting in the front with me. Do all you can for him. Call in a nurse, and let him have my room. Engage the family physician.—For Charlie's sake." Needless to say, the father carried out the request.—Unknown.

For His Father's Sake. A poor boy had enlisted in the British army and had advanced to an officer's position, but he felt very lonely, not believing that any one in the whole world cared much about him. And then one day the Duke of Wellington met him in camp and putting his hand affectionately on his shoulder said, "I knew your father and loved him, and I am watching you and expecting great things of you." How the world was changed after that for the young officer!

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Mt. 25.40. Or, 1 John 4.7a.

The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?—Benjamin Franklin.

Blessed are the joymakers.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The neck is bent by the sword, but heart is only bent by heart.—Arab Proverb.

For whatever men say in their blindness,
And spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.—Alice Cary.

Be ye kind one to another.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is said in 2 S. 14.25, 26 about Absalom's appearance? 2. 2 S. 15.1-6 tells us how Absalom sought to win the hearts of the people away from his father David: how was it? 3. When Absalom formed a conspiracy to get the throne what did David do, according to 2 S. 15.10-14. 4. Of what sins was Absalom guilty? 5. What was Absalom's ambition? 6. In 2 S. 17.11-14, what counsel did Hushai give Absalom in regard to his father David, and how did Absalom receive it? 8. What became of Absalom's body? (2 S. 18.17.) 9. How was the news of Absalom's death brought to David, and how did he grieve for him? 10. Why did David love Absalom? 11. Why was Absalom so base to his father?

Note-Book Work. XVII. The Lesson Title; how David remembered Jona-

than; what he did for Jonathan's son and why; three statements about gratitude; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: DAVID SHOWING HIMSELF KINGLY Or, THE NOBILITY OF KINDNESS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In one of Walter Scott's stories there is an account of a Scottish family that has been very prosperous, but their farmhouse is burned and everything on the farm is stolen, and they find themselves without a roof to shelter them and without money to build anew. While they are wondering what they will do, news is brought of trouble that has come to a distant kinsman, and at once the grandmother says, "Poor man! Can we no' send him something?" When she is reminded that they have nothing to send, she excuses herself, saying, "It's sae natural to think o' one's relatives before one's self." What a happy world this would be if it *were* natural for everybody to think of others before himself!

David had a kindly heart, but for awhile after he became king he had so much to do for his people that there seemed to be no opportunity to pay the debts of kindness he himself owed. When the chance came, his thoughts turned to the member of Saul's family who had been such a true friend to him. Who was he? Why could he not show kindness to him? In what way only could David repay Jonathan's kindness?

Jonathan has long been dead, but David has not forgotten his friend's help in the most trying years of his life. He can not pay the debt he owes to Jonathan, but he can and will pay it to Jonathan's son.

"Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on;
'Twas not given for you alone,
Pass it on."

"There's Nothing so Royal as Kindness." *Kind* and *kin* come from the same Anglo-Saxon word. There is relationship in the moral as well as in the physical world; there is kinship in kindness. If God is our Father then we are all brothers, and should show by our kindness to one another that we are akin to him. What makes more for the happiness of daily life, and sometimes even for the ability to endure life at all, than the spirit of kindness? What greater regret have the majority of people than the unkindnesses done, and the kindnesses not done, to others?

"I want it said of me by those who know me best," said Abraham Lincoln, "that I have always plucked a thistle and planted a flower wherever a flower would grow." What a royally kindly man was he! The spirit of kindness is a fixed purpose, not a chance occurrence and a sometimes. He who has the spirit will find a way of showing it. He will not say, in a helpless sort of way, "Isn't there something I can do to help you?" and on having received the customary "There's nothing you can do, thank you!" answer, rest content that he has shown a readiness to do a kindness. He will find a way or make it.

How a War Secretary Repaid a Kindness. Years ago a woman used to purchase books in a store in an Ohio town. There was a poor young clerk there, who was shy and not popular, but Mrs. Swayne always took time to speak to him pleasantly. She never forgot him when she came in, and the boy, with few intimates, counted her a friend.

Afterwards, Mrs. Swayne's son, General Wager Swayne, became Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau after the Civil War. It was a hard place to fill, for he had to plan for the welfare of all the colored people who were just out of slavery. But General Swayne had one good friend in Washington, the War Secretary, who would go out of his way to help him.

Once General Swayne learned that Mr. Stanton had given him an audience when he had refused to see anyone else because he was so busy. "Mr. Stanton," he said, "I don't understand your favors to me."

The War Secretary smiled. "When I was a poor, lonely, struggling clerk in Columbus, your mother sought me out, and with her kind smiles and encouraging words put new hope and ambition into me. Do you understand me now? I remember your mother's smile."—The Christian Standard.

Pass it On. A long story by Alice Lee tells how a woman who was a cook in a miner's camp passed a kind deed on. She called it her Christ-deed, a kind

deed she had done for some one every Easter for twenty years. At the mining camp she told a reckless young man who was her assistant cook how she was led to make this gift. One Easter time her husband had been thrown from his horse on the Kansas prairie, and would have died there with his broken limb had it not been for a family by the name of Hollandbecker who happened to come across him. "They were good to him, as good as can be," she said. "They had to stop and camp out ten days, he was that bad off, and they sent two hundred miles for a doctor. Mis' Hollandbecker let her husband and two young ones shift for themselves mostly while she took care of him. When he came home, I'd saved fifty dollars keeping boarders, so I sent it to her for bein' so good as to save Lem. She sent it right back with that letter. Read it to me again, Joe. I never get tired of it." And Joe read with a husky voice: "It was merely my Christ-deed for Easter day. Will you pass it on in spirit each Easter?"

"You can tell by what she says that they're rich and don't want for anything," said the woman, "But I've never got over wanting to do something nice for her."

When Easter came the assistant cook was missing, and the doer of the Christ-deeds feared that he had gone off with some wild companions, till a miner brought her this message: "Say, Mis' Staples, Joe ain't gone on a booze. He hasn't been home in years,—folks had no idea where he was,—and he struck the home trail yesterday. He said tell you he'd reach his mother to-night. Wanted me to tell you his name is Hollandbecker, and that his mother'd sure think you'd paid back her Christ-deed—whatever that means!"

Jesus Christ was Kind. Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in merely doing kind things? Run over it with that in view, and you will find that he spent a great proportion of his time simply in making people happy, in doing "good turns" to people. There is only one thing greater than happiness in the world, and that is holiness; and holiness is not in our keeping; but what God has put in our power is the happiness of those about us, and that is largely to be secured by our being kind to them.—Henry Drummond.

Ways of Showing a Kindness. There is a way of showing a kindness which makes the recipient wish you had not been kind. Mr. William George Jordan expresses the recipients' feelings picturesquely thus: "The man who makes another feel like an insect reclining on a red-hot stove while he is receiving a favor, has no right to expect gratitude. He should feel satisfied if he receives forgiveness."

There is a way of doing a kind deed kindly, a gracious deed graciously. "There is a way of doing kindness which looks as if no kindness had been done, a gentle and delicate way which adds preciousness to the gift," Joseph Parker was wont to declare. "I have known some men do a kindness as if they were receiving it rather than giving it. This was Jesus' method, and it will be ours as we approach his likeness."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. No matter how much of a man a man is in himself, he has an added treasure in time of need, when he meets those to whom his father was dear.—Sunday School Times.

Kind hearts are more than coronets.—Tennyson.

The absence of kindness means a frost, a killing frost; it means blight and gloom; it means a world of pain that need not be, imposed upon a world of pain that must be.—George A. Gordon.

The heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.—Faber.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the parable which Nathan told David? 2. How did Nathan show great tact in dealing with the king? 3. What does Nathan's rebuke show as to the one-time doctrine that "the king can do no wrong"? 4. What was the reason that Absalom rebelled against his father? 5. How did Absalom win his followers? (2 S. 15:1-6.) 6. Why did not Joab obey his king's command? 7. Had Absalom been successful in his rebellion, do you think he would have spared David? 8. Why do you think as you do? 9. For whose interests was Absalom always looking out? 10. What was the center of his life? 11. Is there any sin at whose root selfishness does not lie?

Note-Book Work. Part VIII. David Passes on a Kindness.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: AN ELEMENT OF STRENGTH IN DAVID'S CHARACTER

Additional Material: David's Magnanimity in Sparing Saul's Life at Engedi, 1 S. 24.1-7; David's Dirge over his Enemy Saul, 2 S. 1.17-27; David's Regret that his Palace Excelled the Tabernacle, 2 S. 7.1, 2.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "We are coming to see," says the President of Brown University, "that the fittest to survive are not those with the strongest beak, and tongue, and claw, but those with the greatest power to serve their fellows. We have come to see that the invalid in the sick chamber may render greater service than the stout mechanic; that not the bread-winner, but the love-awakener, is most needed in our strenuous civilization." This is a different interpretation of "the fittest" from that held in the pagan world; there the sick or maimed are left to die or even are deliberately killed, and the strong man or tribe exterminates the weak one, just as among the lower animals the stronger devours the weaker. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," says Paul, and he is teaching the doctrine of the Gospels, where gleams on almost every page Christ's pity for the weak, his love for the ignorant or unfortunate or lost.

In the Old Testament we have glimpses of the truth that superior advantages imply superior responsibilities, from the time that Moses espoused the cause of the Israelite slaves in Egypt onward, but in our lesson today we have the first instance in the Old Testament of a man rich in power and influence, stooping to lift up a poor, crippled brother and treating him as one of his own household.

Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, was lame in both his feet, and a poor, weak specimen of humanity withal; what a bitter thought it would have been to Saul had he known that brave Jonathan would perish and leave only this misshapen weakling to represent his house!

I May Show him a Kindness for Jonathan's Sake. Do you remind me that David is now a king, the leader of a conquering army, the creator of a literature which stands unique in the literatures of all time? But back of David's throne lie the hills of Bethlehem; back of the great general stands a shepherd lad, and back of the singer of the Eighth Psalm is a devout youth watching God's stars on the plains by night. And was it not way back there that God gave him his noblest friendship? Poor, friendless, unknown, Jonathan's love made him rich, Jonathan's friendship made him strong, Jonathan's devotion made him well known! In his palace the king was saying to himself, I have my earthly treasure, I have my army, I have my kingdom; but what are all these compared with my soul's unpaid debt of love and gratitude to Jonathan? The friend of my youth is dead now, and I am an old man; but oh, I wonder if there is yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"—Frederick F. Shannon.

It has been noted that when any blessing or compassion was asked of Jesus, the appeal was made to him as the Son of David, the proverbial goodness of the shepherd king having evidently awakened the largest anticipations of beneficence in the Shepherd Saviour.

The Present is Full of Opportunities to Pay our Debts to the Past. It is a useful habit, at certain times, especially for those whom Providence has blessed, to cast over in their minds from time to time the state of their obligations, and endeavor to ascertain whether there be not some persons who have a claim on their kindness. There are other debts than money debts which it becomes us to look after. In youth, perhaps we received some kindness from friends and relations, which at that time we could not repay; twenty or thirty years may have made a great difference in our respective positions; those from whom we received kindness may be in need, while we may be in comfortable circumstances; and yet, unless we deliberately consider from time to time how matters stand, the subject may slip from our thoughts. We are sadly apt to forget these early obligations; but that very forgetfulness gives a world of pain to those to whom we owe them. It is not always hard-heartedness that makes young persons in the prime of life forgetful of the comfort of infirm and aged parents or other near relations; it is often pure thoughtlessness. It is with debts of kindness as with other debts: we are all more ready to remember what is owing to us, than what is owing by us. And our kindness need not be limited

to those who have a positive claim. If ye be kind to those who have been kind to you, what reward have you? The Bible rule is, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men."—William Garden Blaikie.

Kindness for Christ's Sake. The other day a timid and modest young fellow came to sell me pig-iron. I did not want anything but a day with forty-eight hours in it, but I gave him the kind of welcome I like myself, and let him speak his piece. After I had turned him down with all the graciousness I could, he said, "Are you William Ridgway?" "I am." "Well, father told me when I called here if I saw William Ridgway to give him his regards." "And who is your father?" "James Blank, the president of the company." "What?" cried I, leaping to my feet and grabbing his hand, "you the son of my old friend, Jim Blank? Sit down. You go home to dinner with me."

Years ago, before his father had become one of the great men of his city, I, a green youth, trying to get my first invention to market, called upon him, and he helped me, and was one of the best friends I had. Say, suppose I had treated his son as many a man treats a "drummer"! He would have gone home and reported to his father, "Your friend Ridgway is a hog." Kindness for Jonathan his father's sake. Yes, but better and surer still, kindness for Jesus' sake, and then everybody who comes gets the smile, the warm handclasp, and the gentle words for which the whole world is, oh, so hungry. And it costs nothing but a good heart (Matt. 25.40).—William H. Ridgway, in Sunday School Times.

Like King David, He Had a Right to Be Kind. "I have a right to be kind," said the master of Balliol. He said it in defense of his gift of a ten-pound note to a student whom he knew to be poor. The young man was sensitive about receiving a gift, and the master called him in, frankly presented the money, and cut off refusal or discussion by saying, "You know I am your master, and I have a right to be kind."

The student was himself a curt and blunt young man, and proud besides, but there was no gainsaying the master's assumption of authority. Moreover, he was in dire need, and had serious thoughts of giving up his struggle for an education. The ten pounds tided him over, and he was graduated from Oxford, poor, but of large promise.

Years afterwards, when he had become Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple told the story of his need and his relief. "It was impossible to refuse," said he.

That act of blunt kindness, defended by an assumption of authority, had its important part in giving to the world a man of heroic strength. The incident is also significant in another way—the interpretation which the head master put upon the word "rights." It is a word which is frequently in the mouths of persons who have a grievance. They "want their rights," as if the only prerogative worth defending were the power to take! The master, viewing life more sanely, demanded also the power to give.

But kindness needs no defense on the ground of authority. Every man has the right to be kind. In a world where sensitive people are constantly rasped by people almost devoid of finer feelings, where want is made more keen by the sight of waste, and where the gala procession and the funeral jostle each other in the busy streets in which impatient throngs wait with equal impatience for the passing of both, the call for kindness is constant and imperative. No call is more easily performed, and none takes to itself a wider variety of diversified ministration.—Youth's Companion.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Half the beauty and power of Christian charity is in the personality of its administration.—Pentecost.

2. The survival of the fittest.

3. Modern philanthropical methods.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why is the sin of a man like David, "a man after God's own heart," preserved in the Old Testament? 2. What parallel to David's crime is there in Macbeth? 3. What story did Nathan tell the king? 4. What skill did Nathan show in the telling? 5. David did not with his own hand slay Uriah with the sword; why did Nathan accuse him of doing so? 6. What did David confess to Nathan? 7. How did David show himself a weak father? 8. What lessons have we already had about parental responsibility? 9. What personal grudge did Joab have against Absalom? (2 S. 14.28-33.) 10. Jesus' words in Mt. 16.26 befit Absalom's ambition: what are they? 11. The words of Lam. 1.12 befit David's sorrow: what are they?

THE SINS AND SORROWS OF DAVID

Golden Text

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6.7

LESSON 2 Samuel 12.9, 10; 18.1-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 1.7-16

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 2 Samuel 11 to 20

2 SAMUEL 12.9 Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

18.1 And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2 And David sent forth the people, a third part under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. 3 But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but thou art worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succor us out of the city. 4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate-side, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. 5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. 7 And the people of Israel were smitten there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men. 8 For the battle was there spread over the face of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and earth; and the mule that was under him went on. 10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. 11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *pieces of* silver, and a girdle. 12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *pieces of* silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. 13 Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his life (and there is no matter hid from the king), then thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*. 14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. 15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

THE Sin of David
Setting forth for Battle
Slaughter in the Forest
Slaying of Absalom

G. Rochegrosse

DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM

Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over the Jordan. 2 Samuel 17.22.

See page 319.

I. THE SIN OF DAVID, 2 S. 12.9, 10. See the Historical Background. Verses 9 and 10 in the narrative form part of Nathan's words to David in which Nathan brings home to him his guilt. *Thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword:* David had brought this about through his order to Joab, verses 14-25. *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house.* Great domestic tragedies followed: the murder of Amnon by Absalom, the warfare with Absalom and Absalom's death, the execution of Adonijah.

II. ABSALOM'S SINS AND HIS CONSPIRACY AGAINST DAVID; DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM; AHITHOPHEL'S AND HUSHAI'S COUNSEL TO ABSALOM, 2 S. 13-17. See the Historical Background.

III. PREPARATIONS FOR BATTLE WITH ABSALOM AND HIS MEN, 2 S. 18.1-5. David organized his army and reviewed it, for this is the meaning of *David numbered the people that were his,* and appointed the officers over the various divisions, *the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds.* Placing a third of the army under the command of Joab, a third under the command of Abishai, Joab's brother, and a third under the command of Ittai the Gittite, David proposed to be himself the commander-in-chief—*I will surely go forth with you myself also,* he said. But David's followers protested: *If we flee away, they will not care for us: neither if half of us die, will they care for us; but thou art worth ten thousand of us. Therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succor us out of the city,* they counselled. From Mahanaim David could send reinforcements, and in case of defeat his reserve force in the city could protect them from the pursuers. The king yielded: *What seemeth you best I will do,* he said. David stood by the gate of the city and saw his forces march forth to battle. *Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom,* he commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai.

IV. THE SLAUGHTER OF THE REBEL'S FORCES IN THE FOREST OF EPHRAIM, 2 S. 18.6-8. *So the people went out into the field against Israel:* David's army made the attack upon Absalom's and slaughtered that day twenty thousand men. The battle ranged over a large territory, *and the forest devoured more people than the sword devoured.* The forest seems to have been a sort of jungle, and this statement may mean either that they fell into swamps and over cliffs that were hidden by the trees, or as Kirkpatrick suggests, that owing to the nature of the ground more were slain in the pursuit through the forest than in the actual battle.

V. THE REBEL'S FATE, 2 S. 18.9-15. Absalom was riding his mule—perhaps David's own mule on which only royalty might ride—and in going *under the thick boughs of a great oak, his head caught hold of the oak.* His head became wedged in the fork of a branch: it is from Josephus that the tradition comes that he hung by the hair of his head. See Prov. 30.17. The mule that was under him went on, leaving him suspended from the tree. Some of these oaks, or terebinths, have such low branches that one cannot stand upright beneath.

One of the soldiers saw the accident and reported it to Joab. Scathingly Joab spoke to him, *Behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten pieces of silver*—about seven dollars, perhaps equivalent in purchasing power to one hundred dollars—*and a girdle.* "If I were to feel the weight of the money paid into my hand," as Driver forcibly renders the soldier's reply, *Yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son.* He reminded Joab of David's charge to him, and knowing Joab's unscrupulous nature, he added, *Thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.*

He well knew that Joab would have freed himself from the king's anger by charging the soldier with the deed.

The conversation was not pleasing to Joab and he quickly put an end to it. *I may not tarry thus with thee:* he has no time to waste, for there is need of haste, or Absalom will be freed from his predicament. *He took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom.* "Not literally through the heart, but into the body. Since the Hebrew word used means elsewhere *rods* or *staves,* and the wounds inflicted were not at once mortal, it seems that Joab struck Absalom brutally with pointed wooden staves, the first weapon which came to hand, in fact, in a kind of way, impaled him as a traitor, and left his squires, the ten young men that bare Joab's armor and compassed him

about, to give him the *coup de grace*" (Kirkpatrick). This murder of Absalom was necessary, Joab thought, for the safety of the kingdom. Joab was fiercely loyal to David in this act, but he was a vindictive man, and he may have been actuated also by a desire for personal revenge, for Absalom had set fire to Joab's grain and compelled that imperious general to do his bidding, 2 S. 14.28-33. Though Joab had "turned not after Absalom," he did some years after this turn after Adonijah when the latter organized a rebellion against Solomon, and he was then put to death as a traitor.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The King stood by the gate-side, 2 S. 18.4. The Eastern city gate has always been the public meeting place for the people. Here traders met and judges dealt out justice. The king transacted business in its shade or at the gate of the palace.

It was in the room between the two gates that David sat to await the news of the battle between his forces and those of Absalom. When he learned of Absalom's death he rushed up the stairway to the chamber over the gate, above this lower room, to give way to his grief. It was on the roof above this upper chamber that the night watchman stood when looking for the coming of the messenger from the battle.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What good qualities did David show as a shepherd lad? As a member of Saul's court? As an outlaw hunted by the king? As a king? What temptations came to David which he resisted? What sons proved a disgrace to their father in our last Quarter's lesson? What did their father say when he heard that they should die for their sins? Where was he when news of their death was brought him, and what happened? One of the reasons which the people gave Samuel for their wanting a king concerned Samuel's sons: what was it?

Three Periods in David's Life as King. David's life as King of Israel divides naturally into three periods: (1) a period of war and conquest; (2) a period of peace and prosperity; (3) a period of domestic troubles. Our lesson belongs to the first and last periods, for it was while the Ammonite war was being carried on that David's great sin occurred, and the death of Absalom belongs to the third period.

David's Sin. After David had basely caused the death in battle of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, and had taken her as his wife, the prophet Nathan came to the king and told him a parable of a rich robber who stole a poor man's only lamb. Such a man deserved death, David declared: "Thou art the man," said Nathan. David humbly confessed his guilt.

Trouble between David and his Son Absalom. At a feast to which he invited all his friends, Absalom slew his half-brother Ammon, who had basely wronged Tamar, Absalom's sister. No doubt there was a desire also in Absalom's heart to put out of the way the elder son of David who might succeed to the throne which he was determined should be his. To escape the consequences of the deed, he fled to his grandfather, the King of Geshur. Here he remained three years. Through the efforts of Joab, he was recalled. Joab used the same art that Nathan had used when he convicted David of his guilt; through a "wise woman of Tekoa" he obtained from the king a judgment on a fictitious case which committed him to the recall of his son. David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but refused to see him. After two years of such treatment, Absalom compelled Joab to intercede for him, and he was restored to the king's favor.

Absalom's Conspiracy. After Absalom was restored to his father's favor, he began a systematic course of treachery to arouse dissatisfaction with his father's government, and to win the people to himself, purposing when the time was ripe to seize the throne. During the next four years, he showed the people what a magnificent king he would make by assuming the royal state, driving forth in a chariot with fifty men to run before him. He made it his practice to rise early every day and stand by the gate to court the favor of those who came with their suits to David for judgment, by showing great interest in each

one. He would not allow the customary obeisance, but kissed them all as his friends. In these ways he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Absalom planned for a simultaneous uprising against the king throughout the country. First he asked and obtained David's permission to go to Hebron to pay a vow there, which he claimed to have made when in exile at Geshur. He invited two hundred of the chief men of Jerusalem to go with him to offer sacrifices to the Lord, and they "went in their simplicity," not knowing what he purposed doing. Ahithophel, David's trusted counselor, joined him. Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the kingdom to announce that at the sound of the trumpet Absalom would be king. The conspiracy grew.

David's Flight from Jerusalem. Absalom's plot was disclosed to David; taken by surprise, he saw no hope except in flight. With his household and his Philistine body-guard of six hundred men and accompanied by Joab his general, Abishai, Joab's brother, and Ittai the Gittite (who had steadfastly persisted in following his king's fallen fortunes despite David's urging that he turn back to Absalom), David left his capital, crossed the brook Kidron, and ascended the Mount of Olives. Zadok and Abiathar the priests started with the ark, but David bade them return. Hushai, also, his trusted counsellor, David sent back to the city, bidding him gain the good will of Absalom and then report to him (David) through the priests and their sons what was being done.

Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth came and represented that Mephibosheth, ungrateful for all the king's kindness to him, had decided to remain in Jerusalem, hoping to gain his father's throne. As the sad-hearted king went his way toward the Jordan, Shimei, a man of the house of Saul, followed along the hill above and threw stones and dust at him and cursed him, for his treatment long ago of the sons of Saul. Abishai wished to slay him, but David said that his own son was seeking his life, "how much more may this Benjamite now do it?" And he would not suffer him to be harmed.

Absalom in Jerusalem. Absalom meanwhile made a triumphal entry of Jerusalem and was anointed king. Ahithophel counselled that a force be sent after David at once, before he had time to collect his forces, but Hushai, acting for David's interests, counselled Absalom to wait till he himself had a very large army, for David's prowess in warfare was well known. Then Hushai sent secret messengers to David, who was encamped in the plain of the Jordan, urging him to cross the Jordan. David advanced to Mahanaim, where the East Jordan tribe rallied to his support. Absalom adopted Hushai's plan, thinking to add to his glory by a magnificent attack, and Ahithophel, realizing that Absalom thereby lost his golden opportunity, committed suicide rather than suffer the results to himself of his treachery to King David.

The Battle: Death of Absalom. When Absalom had mustered a large force he crossed the Jordan to make the attack. How he met his death is the theme of our lesson.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The conversation between Nathan and David took place at David's palace, Jerusalem.

Mahanaim, the city to which David fled, and from which his troops went out, was in Eastern Palestine, between the Yarmuk and the Yabbok rivers.

The Hill Country of Ephraim lay west of the Jordan, but the forests of Ephraim, where the battle took place, was evidently east of the Jordan, between that river and Mahanaim. "Why should it be thought unlikely that the name Ephraim should have crossed the river and fastened on the eastern bank?" questions Dr. George Adam Smith. "In the course of the history of one tribe, especially in the days of the Judges, a hundred adventures were likely to occur to cause the Ephraimites, who so frequently passed over, to leave their name behind them when they went back. Or a colony may easily have settled there. And, in fact, we do read of Ephraimites settling in Gilead in such large numbers that the western Ephraimites call the Gileadites fugitives from Ephraim (Judges 12.4)."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

And the King said unto the people . . . But the people said . . . And the King said unto them . . . And the King commanded, saying . . . And a certain man said . . . And Joab said unto the man . . . And the

man said unto Joab . . . Then said Joab. Each of these statements is followed by the direct words of the speakers. Change the text by putting the direct speeches into indirect, thus: And the king told the people that he would go with them, but the people said that they did not wish to have him, etc. You find that the account has lost all of its vividness and forcefulness and much of its interest. Apply this principle of direct speech wherever possible in the illustrations which you use to enforce your teaching.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: DAVID AND ABSALOM

Lesson Material: 2 S. 15.1-14; 18.5-15, 31-33.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There is a nursery rhyme which represents the meanest kind of person. Do you recall it?

"Take a cup
And drink it up—
And call the neighbors in."

I think Absalom was that kind of young man. He was intensely selfish. He wanted the best chariot and best robe and best everything, until at length he decided that he wanted the throne of Israel. And he wanted it right away even though it meant treachery and exile, if not death, to his own father. (Describe Absalom as he rode about in his chariot, or sat at the gate and told the people what he would do for them if he were king. Tell about the gathering of troops at Hebron, the march to Jerusalem, the flight of David across the Jordan, the rallying of his warriors at Mahanaim, King David's desire to lead his troops, the solicitude of his people, and his anxiety for his wicked son.)

A Son's Baseness. It is an Old Testament story of a prodigal son which we have today. Absalom was clever and attractive, but he was thoroughly selfish and bad. Absalom did not "go to the bad" through drinking and gambling, nor through wasting his substance on riotous living as did the prodigal son that Jesus told about; he took a different road. He was eaten up with selfish ambition, he did not care whom he injured as long as he came out on top.

A Father's Love. Absalom was utterly unworthy of his father's love, but David loved him deeply notwithstanding. Absalom's rebellion forced David to flee for his life, and it nearly cost David his throne. It was the greatest trouble and the narrowest escape David ever had. And it was his own loved son who dealt the blow. David will not be so fond of his graceless son when he finds him out, do you think? But he was. He will cease to love that son when he drives him from his throne? But he did not. He will rejoice when he hears his son is dead? But he cried with a bitter cry: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Absalom couldn't weaken nor kill that love. It was too strong.

But great as was that father's love, it could not keep Absalom from evil ways, could not prevent his becoming a traitor and perishing miserably at the last. That is the tragedy of love—that do what it will, it cannot save. No father can save his son, however much he loves him. Goodness or badness depends upon oneself, and whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Selfishness Grows. Two small boys were riding on a rocking horse; after a short time, the little fellow who was rather uncomfortable on the horse's head, remarked, "I think if one of us gets off, I could ride much better." Is not this the attitude of many older ones?

Doctor Farrar has some very scathing words about the selfishness of grown people. "To most men and women self is everything," he says. "Their whole life is a room, lined with looking-glasses, presenting to them in all directions, and at every glance, innumerable reflections and multiplications of their own petty selves. With boundless self-importance, as though the world were made for them, and everybody were looking at them and thinking of them, they make themselves, their own selves, the whole."

The selfishness of the little fellow on the rocking-horse, so natural that it amuses us, if allowed to grow unchecked may not make an Absalom, but it may make that uncomfortable, useless, petty self which Doctor Farrar denounces.

Sow Selfishness and you Will Reap Scorn. "This piece of chocolate cake is for me, isn't it, Mrs. Kane?" said Wilda, smiling, as she reached across to take

the largest piece on the plate. She did it with a frank, good-natured air, and the hostess smiled as she passed on, but nevertheless there was a doubt growing in her mind. Wilda was such an attractive appearing girl! She had been pleased when her daughter, Doris, brought Wilda home for a two weeks' visit. But could it be that pretty, clever Wilda was selfish and—well, almost plain greedy?

But as the days passed Wilda's attractiveness seemed to diminish. It was Wilda who got the easiest chair, the best seat in the automobile, the first glimpse of the new magazine. She was never insistent or cross; she just took these things as her right.

But at dinner the night after Wilda had gone home, Doris' big brother exclaimed: "Well, she sure was the limit for grabbing everything in sight!"

And even gentle Mrs. Kane said: "I think you'd better not ask her again, Doris. That kind of girl wears on a person."

"I don't intend to," said Doris, who was seldom critical of her friends.

The girl who takes more than her share will seldom find any one disputing the matter with her. Only horrid, aggressive people will do that, and she will calmly turn her back on them, thinking they do not count. The nice people, her own intimates, will go on letting her take the best and easiest and largest. But in taking more than her share she is taking even more than she thinks. She is taking the scorn of all who notice her. She is taking light and slighting estimates of her character. Little by little, as she grows older and her ugly attributes stand out more plainly, she is left out of things and loses her friends.—Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Proverbs 13.15 (The way, etc.).

The gravitation of sin to sorrow is as certain as that of the earth to the sun. —T. H. Huxley.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did David ask God to do in verses 1, 2, 9, & 10? 2. What parable did Jesus give by which he taught that God is ready to forgive anyone who repents of his sin? (Lk. 15.11-32.) 3. What did Judas do when he realized his sin? 4. What did Peter do when he realized his sin? 5. How did Peter learn that he was forgiven? 6. If we confess our sins, what will God do? (1 Jn. 1.9.)

Note-Book Work. XVIII. The Lesson Title; how Absalom treated his father; how his father treated Absalom; three statements about selfishness; the Golden Text.

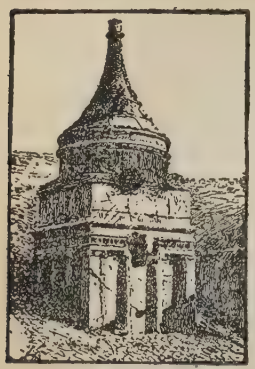
TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: ABSALOM'S SELFISH LIFE AND HOW IT ENDED

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Absalom was the only one of David's sons whose mother was a princess. No doubt this fact led him early to believe that he was the rightful heir to the throne. He had great personal attractions, "in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for beauty," and this would lead him to consider himself superior to all his brothers. But Bathsheba had more influence with David than did his other wives, and her son, Solomon, Absalom knew, was the favorite son. It was evident to Absalom that if he attained to the throne, it would not be in the regular way. And king he was determined to be, no matter how he brought it about.

Absalom's Selfish Life and How it Ended. See the Historical Background. It seems almost incredible that Absalom could so long and deliberately strive to undermine his father's reputation and regard among his people, and then resort to arms to gain the throne for himself. When King James IV of Scotland was a boy, he took up arms against his father, and his manhood was made bitter with remorse for the deed. In penance he wore beneath his outer garments an iron belt, and every year he added to it an extra weight, to remind him that his remorse should only increase with the years. Absalom was slain by Joab, but had he lived there is no probability that he would have repented. His dark deeds were so deliberately planned, and their execution so long in the carrying out, that his baseness was evidently a part of his nature, not a sudden, hasty act. He is an example of all a son should not be.

In the Valley of the Kidron below Jerusalem there is today a stone monument

forty feet high which the Jews call the Tomb of Absalom. No Jew passes it without throwing a stone against it and exclaiming, "Cursed be the memory of Absalom and cursed be every child who rises up in rebellion against his parents." Notice the large hole that has been made through the face of the tomb, into which stones are now hurled.



Absalom's Tomb

How Another Selfish Life Might Have Ended. "I am going to be blind, and I shall never forgive him; do not let us mention it again."

The words were spoken quietly by a young woman to her minister. Her eyes were bandaged as the result of an injury received from a golf ball. It had been struck by her own brother, and by accident had inflicted the blow which had had such terrible results.

The girl was strong, ambitious, pleasure-loving. That the joy of life should stop for her at twenty was the most terrible tragedy possible.

The black despair in which she was living was scarcely greater than that into which her rebellion had plunged her whole family. Her father and mother heard with horror the bitterness of her tone and saw the hardness of her face whenever she spoke of the accident. She would not permit her brother to enter her room. She would bury her ears in her pillows if she heard his voice. In short, she was in the grasp of the monster of unforgiveness. Could any word be spoken that should lift her out of darkness into light? The clergyman who had watched her since she was a child, who knew her faults and loved her in spite of them, was seeking that word.

"Kate," he said, "you are right in saying it does no good to talk. But before silence falls you must hear the truth once.

"You have claimed the world. It was made, you believed, for your pleasure. Parents, friends, servants, above all your brother, sprang to do your wish. Now you are blind, and you declare that you will not forgive. I tell you—for I dare—that your own blindness is your one chance to win a nobler self. While you could see, you saw no human pain, you felt no other's need. Now your eyes are closed to outward things that you may learn to see deeper. We have but half known the dreadful truth, but we now know that you were on the way to be a curse. Now you may be a blessing if you will. It may come to pass for you that losing your sight you shall find it." The minister stopped and went quietly out, and the stricken girl was left alone—in the dark.

Days passed, and it became evident that a terrible struggle was going on in her spirit.

At last the moment came when she gave way before the voice of conscience and the call of love. She asked to see her brother. What passed in that long-deferred meeting no one knew; but out of it came sunshine for the whole suffering family. That she had received spiritual sight was to them and to her as if she had regained physical sight. One and all addressed themselves to the cheerful acceptance of the affliction. Kate's room became the gathering place of the household. As she slowly learned to move about the house and to occupy herself, they all rejoiced in each new accomplishment. Her whole nature seemed transformed by her loss. Selfishness and pleasure-seeking became patience and consideration. She was so bright and appreciative that pity scarcely woke at thought of her.

When three years had passed, some chance expression of sympathy caught her ear. "Don't say that!" she exclaimed. "I am really like the poor man in the Bible, and can truthfully say, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.' I can't be grateful enough for the courage of the friend who touched my eyes. He told me the bitter truth—and the truth made me free."—Youth's Companion.

Only Two Centers on the Universe. There are but two centers in the universe, God and Self. We recognize either the one or the other of these as the center about which all things revolve and towards which all things are drawn, in our existence. In the one case we consider our neighbor, the world, our interests, our duties, and our pleasures, in their relation to God and in God's relation to them. In the other case, we consider all these things in their relation to Self, and the relation of Self to them. How is it in your case?

Selfishness is darkness. It shuts us up in the tight little box of our own lives. Unselfishness gives us a wide circle of interest and delight. What we do for others has as much to do with our happiness as what we get for ourselves.—Editorial in S. S. Times.

The Remedy for Selfishness. The one who is self-centered has his thoughts fixed upon a very small object. The way out into the larger life is given in this brief prayer of Whittier's:

"Change the dream of me and mine
To the truth of Thee and Thine."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Of the path of selfishness it is still true that broad is the way and wide is the gate, and many there be who go in thereat. —George A. Gordon.

Know that love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world.—Thomas à Kempis.

Self-seeking has no centennial.—Benjamin Harrison.

Christ pleased not himself.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What terms does David apply to his wrongdoing? 2. What terms do we sometimes use to minimize our wrongdoing? (Failing, mistake, bad break, etc.) 3. What young man once came to Jesus who was unconscious of having sinned? (Mk. 10.17-22.) 4. What did John the Baptist say about repentance? (Mk. 1. 14.) 5. What did Jesus say about genuine repentance? (Lk. 3.8-14.) 6. What does John say in 1 Jn. 1.8, 9 about confession and forgiveness? 7. What is the difference between the prayer of the Publican and of the Pharisee, as told in Lk. 18.9-14? 8. Of what great wrong was Peter guilty, and what did he do? (Mk. 14.) 9. If sin is forgiven, are its consequences cancelled?

Note-Book Work. Part IX. David's Sins and Sorrows.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS IN DAVID'S CHARACTER

Additional Material: 2 Samuel 12.1-14.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. We see David today at his worst, guilty of breaking two laws of the Decalogue. There is no record in the Bible of cool, remorseless treachery which surpasses David's in the way he accomplished the death of the husband of the woman he had determined to add to his harem. But to estimate the man, Dr. Henry Preserved Smith reminds us, "we must remember that he was an oriental, and therefore sensual, crafty and cruel. In no one of these qualities did he fall below the standards of the times in which he lived. The case of Uriah, indeed, shocked the moral sense of his contemporaries. It is not our concern to hold him up as a pattern of all the virtues. Probably few men of his time, however, would have gone through difficulties which he encountered and done so little to offend the conscience of a later time."

David's Sins. Professor Kent in his History of the Hebrew People, thus estimates David's character:—In him the elements of strength and weakness peculiar to his age find their clearest illustration. His versatility and tendency to do everything in the superlative explain why different generations and individuals have regarded him with such varying degrees of favor. As a matter of fact, his character was neither that of the Christian saint nor of the designing villain. The two opposite tendencies—either to condone his faults while idealizing his virtues, or to try and condemn him before the bar of modern ethics—are equally unjust and misleading. He was a man of his times, and should therefore be measured by the standards of his own day. In so doing, the mistake of holding up an imperfect character as a model for the present is avoided, and at the same time a true estimate of the real David is gained. It must be remembered constantly that he was removed from the period of the judges by only one generation. The years of bitter warfare which joined the days of Gideon and David were not calculated to soften the barbarity of Israel's pioneer epoch. When an enlightened seer like Samuel hewed a captured enemy into pieces (1 Sam. 15), little clemency can be expected from a conquering king. We shudder when we read of David's treatment of the subjugated Moabites and Edomites, and yet he was only acting in accordance with the practices of the old Semitic world. He did not hesitate on many occasions to pervert the truth

when an object was to be gained; in the words of Saul, "he was able to deal very subtly." To the priests of Nob and his Philistine patron, Achish king of Gath, he deliberately made misrepresentations; but he lived among a people who at that stage in their development regarded the ability to deceive successfully as almost a virtue. Even today the proverb, "A lie is the salt of a man," voices the sentiment of the orient. The means which David used to secure the kingship of all Israel certainly are laudable compared with those which were then in vogue. The defects, which we who stand in the full light of New Testament revelation so deeply deplore, commended rather than condemned David in the eyes of his contemporaries.

Of all his recorded acts, two alone fall far below the standards which were known at that time. The dethroned tyrants, Lust and Murder, who had ruled supreme over primitive man, for the time being mastered Israel's king. They gained the ascendancy under the guise of those current oriental ideas according to which a monarch was regarded as the irresponsible master of his subjects. But David as a Hebrew king was responsible both to his people and to Jehovah, the God of righteousness; against both he sinned consciously.

While David's crimes against society were the most culpable, the greatness and breadth of his character were demonstrated by his repentance. The narrative does not suggest that he felt any such overpowering sense of sin as came to the enlightened Hebrews of a later age; but the sight of a conquering monarch humbly confessing his sins was unprecedented. It bespoke a high degree of moral sensibility, and furnished most unequivocal evidence that he recognized the law of Jehovah as superior to that of his own royal will.

The recognition of this divine law is the key to the understanding of his character. If he had stood in the full light of prophetic teaching, it is doubtful whether he would have committed his dark crimes; surely the spiritual light within him was not strong enough to reveal the heinousness of deceit and of cruelty to his enemies. At the same time, it is clear that he was one who deeply and genuinely feared Jehovah; in this respect he was far in advance of the kings who preceded and immediately followed him.

David's Weak Treatment of Absalom. In the aftermath of Absalom's rebellion we see David's love for his son was so great that he would have forgiven Absalom's attempt to undermine his father's position on the throne, his treason, his taking up arms, all and everything, if only his life might have been spared. And in David's bitter cry on learning of Absalom's death, we see that love and grief so possessed the father's soul that the King's heart forgot all about the fate of his country and his people.

But did Absalom in his lifetime realize how his father loved him? Evidently not. David's treatment of Absalom had been thoroughly weak. When he allowed Absalom to return from Geshur whither he had fled after killing his half-brother Ammon, David said that he might return to his own house, but he himself would not see him. For two years Absalom lived at Jerusalem without seeing the king. David neither punished Absalom for his crime nor restored him to favor. He recalled him without receiving any sign of repentance from him, and then irritated him by excluding him from court. All this time the narrative allows us to see that David "mourned for his son every day" while he was in exile, and after he returned he "longed to go forth unto Absalom," but of this Absalom himself knew nothing.

David's treatment of Absalom and his subsequent grief over his death were paralleled by a father in New York who had his son sent to the Reform School on Blackwell's Island, and paid no attention to letter after letter which the boy wrote him begging for forgiveness and promising to live uprightly if his father would bail him out, and then, when the boy attempted to swim away from the island and was drowned and the body was brought to his father, the father who had really loved him all this time, swooned and died.

Sin is Far-Reaching in its Effect. Mr. Henry A. Atkinson, writing in the Adult Bible Class Magazine, recalls the history of a young man who committed suicide in Boston a few years ago. "At the time he was a prisoner in the Charles St. jail. He had killed a Boston policeman in a local restaurant, and for this crime was being tried for his life. In a letter addressed to the sheriff he said, 'It is a hard game, when you have to die to beat it.' Robinson was a desperate fellow, he had robbed and killed, and by his sheer nerve and audacity gained a reputation as a bad man among the denizens of the lower world. His

life was a tragedy from start to finish. His father, refusing to marry his mother, deserted her in her hour of need. This made the mother so desperate that, determining to kill her faithless lover, she began to practice shooting with a revolver. She never again saw the man who deserted her, but her boy was born with a strong bent for adventure, and a sullen resentment against society. From the details of his life, as published after his death, it may easily be concluded that his many crimes and all his lawlessness were the direct result of his father's sin. Could sin be limited to its effect upon the sinner, it would be bad enough, but when we think of all it entails it appears far more serious still."

The Wasp and the Tar. On a steep iron roof a man was spreading tar. A wasp halted to flop himself against the freshly tarred roof. The tar smelled bad—very bad; it made the wasp angry. So he balanced himself and plunged full weight against the "big black stink." He was not much damaged, however, and could have sailed away and within a few moments have been as happy and as cheerful as any wasp in the land. But no, he flopped himself again and again, against the fresh, shining tar. He plunged his stinger into the big, black tin roof. It didn't hurt the tin roof a bit, but he got considerable tar on his right wing. This made him more angry, and he flew right back and got more tar on the right wing and some on the left wing.

"O foolish wasp," said the owl in a tree nearby, "why don't you fly away? It's too late now even to get it all off your wings—that bad stuff, but you could fly away and live and be happy."

But again and again the foolish wasp returned to his attack. Each time he fared worse. Now his two wings stuck fast to the tar. Just ahead of him in a little hollow place was a pool of tar. One could plainly see that if he kept on struggling he would soon roll into that black pool and drown.

He saw it, too. With one super-wasp strength he got loose, with tar just dripping from his head, legs and wings. He was about half persuaded then to fly away, but a gust of wind caught him, and as he was now feeble, the wind blew him right back just a little nearer the pool. Soon he was all covered with tar. He twisted and turned and wriggled, and over he went into the pool. A few more wriggles and he was completely covered. A last wriggle and the wasp was still!

How like the struggle of life is the struggle of the wasp in the tar! In the long ago we could have left our sins and recovered our goodness completely. We didn't do it. Later we could have torn loose from those sins, and been only slightly damaged. We didn't do it. Then there came the day when we realized that there would always cling to us that black streak of tar, still, we could have separated from those sins and lived and been quite happy. We didn't do it.

There came the sad, sad day to some of us when by those sins we were bound hand and foot as by chains and ropes of steel. And last, there comes the awful day when each struggle only brings the struggler nearer and nearer the great black tar-pool. Looking ahead, some are able to see only the fate that awaited the wasp—the big black pool—that pool of eternal death.—Condensed from a sermon in The Christian Work, by Arthur Hail Keeney.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Sin is sin, and deserves the same punishment at the hands of public justice whether committed by king or subject, rich or poor, wise or ignorant.

2. The parent who does not secure the allegiance and obedience of his child is as really violating the fifth commandment as is the child who disobeys and dishonors him.—William M. Taylor.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are the Penitential Psalms? (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.) 2. What does the 51st Psalm tell us that David had learned about God? 3. What does it declare the essential element in all accepted worship or service? 4. What does it tell us that David had learned about sin? 5. Which of the Penitential Psalms expresses the greatest abhorrence of sin? 6. According to Prov. 28.13, what conditions must be fulfilled before God's forgiveness becomes effective? 7. What does John say about sin and forgiveness in the first chapter of his First Epistle? 8. Why is repentance for sin necessary? 9. How is repentance brought about? 10. How is true repentance shown? 11. Oftener than any other character in the Bible Saul said, "I have sinned": was he therefore genuinely repentant? 12. Was Germany repentant when she was sorry for failure?

A PRAYER FOR PARDON

Golden Text

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin. Psalm 51.2

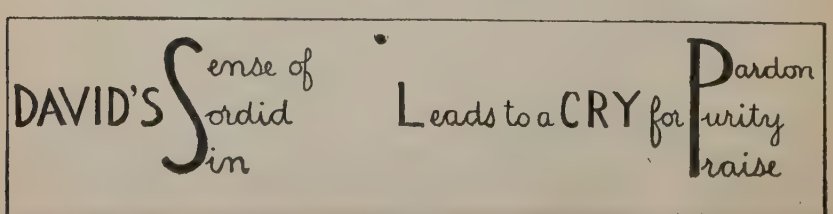
LESSON Psalm 51.1-17 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 32.1-7

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 2 Samuel 11 and 12

PSALM 51.1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I know my transgressions;
And my sin is ever before me.
4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight;
That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.
5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity;
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts;
And in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.
7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8 Make me to hear joy and gladness,
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
9 Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from thy presence;
And take not thy holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
And uphold me with a willing spirit.
13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation;
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
15 O Lord, open thou my lips;
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.
16 For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. A DEEP CONVICTION OF SIN AND AN INTENSE CRY FOR PARDON, verses 1-9. *Have mercy upon me, O God.* "'Twas wont to be, 'O my God,' quaintly says John Trapp, "but David had sinned away his assurance, wiped off his comfortables; he dared not claim propriety in God, nor relation to him, as having forfeited both." *According to thy loving kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies:* in this lies the Psalmist's only right to his plea: it is only because he believes in God's goodness and mercy that he dares ask forgiveness. "For us who have the perfect love of God perfectly expressed in his Son, that same plea is incalculably strengthened, for we can say, 'According to thy tender mercies in thy dear Son, blot out our transgressions'" (Maclaren).

Blot out my transgressions. "What will the Lord do with my sin, if in true humility I come into his Presence? He will blot it out as I have seen a gloomy cloudlet blotted out, and there has been nothing left but radiant sky" (Jowett).

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity. "Yes, and that not like the washing of the hands, but like the washing of clothes, not like the washing of a surface, but the removal of uncleanness from a fabric, the ousting of any germ lurking in the innermost cells of the stuff. When the Lord washes a soul it is thoroughly done, and every strand is white with holiness" (Jowett). *And cleanse me from my sin.* Note the successive terms: *transgression,* the violation of law: *iniquity,* crookedness from the straight path of righteousness: *sin,* missing the mark.

My sin is ever before me. "When we have sin before us we dwell for a time under the shadow of the Almighty, and when the shadow passes, it is with us as it is with a garden where in hot weather the clouds gather and break gently and then pass—the sun comes out with a new glory, the grass is greener and the birds sing more sweetly on the branches" (John A. Hutton).

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. David had sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba as well as against God: "but as all obligations to men have their foundations in God's law, so all sin against them is included and hidden in the one fact of offense against God."

That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Here the word *that* evidently does not mean *in order that,* rather does it have the meaning of *so that:* the sin was not for the purpose of showing forth divine righteousness but it resulted in clearly showing the divine justice.

Verse 5 "does not reflect any stain on the psalmist's birth, but traces his sin to the inborn evil of his nature. 'Original sin' is theological terminology for the same facts which science gathers together under the name of 'heredity.' The psalmist is not responsible for later dogmatic developments of the idea, but he feels that he has to confess not only his acts but his sinful nature" (Maclaren).

"The discovery of inherent and inherited sinfulness brings with it another discovery—that of the penetrating depth of the requirement of God's law, verse 6. Truth within—inward correspondence with his will, and absolute sincerity of soul are his desire. Only God can enable such a being as man to become such as he will delight in; and since he seeks for truth within, he thereby pledges himself to give the truth and wisdom for which he seeks" (Maclaren).

The psalmist renews his prayer for pardon: *Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean,* he cries, alluding to the sprinkling of lepers and unclean persons by means of a bunch of the herb. *Wash me and I shall be white as snow.* See Isa 1.18. *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* "His bones have been crushed, that is, his whole self has been, as it were, ground to powder by the weight of God's hand, but restoration is possible. A penitent heart is not too bold when it asks for joy."

II. A PRAYER FOR PURITY, verses 10-12. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.* Make my life wholly different from what it was before, give me a *steadfast* spirit (as the margin reads) that will not yield to temptation. "The very atmosphere of my life shall be as the air after a deluge of cleansing rain. It shall be sweet, and clean, and clear! I shall walk in a new inspiration" (Jowett).

"The group of petitions in verse 11 are negative. It deprecates a possible tragic separation from God. If we remember how it had fared with his predecessor, from whom, because of impenitence, 'the Spirit of the Lord departed, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him,' we understand how Saul's successor, trembling as he remembers his fate, prays with peculiar emphasis, 'Take

not the Holy Spirit from me.'" *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.* "A spirit of willing and unforced obedience" (Dummelow).

III. VOWS OF SERVICE AND PRAISE, verses 13-17. "Then will follow the joy of salvation, success in soul-winning, humility of soul, what glorious boons are these!"(Meyer). *And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.* "Only those who have struck the deepest note of penitence, can reach the highest note of praise"(A. J. Gordon). *The sacrifices of God are a broken heart: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* He is certain of forgiveness.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Blot out, verse 1, "as from a record"; *wash,* verse 2, "as foul stains which must be rubbed and beaten out, as in the East today with smooth stones"; *cleanse,* verse 2, "as a leper, who was sprinkled by the sprig of hyssop."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When Saul sinned and his sin was brought home to him, was he repentant? How did David receive Nathan's rebuke of his sin? Was David repentant? What did we learn last year about the nature of repentance?

Psalm 51. The heading of this Psalm, is: A Contrite Sinner's Prayer for Pardon, a Psalm of David when Nathan the Prophet Came unto him. It is generally believed that this Psalm and Psalm 32 express David's penitence for his sins, and his joy in his pardon. It has been well said that in the Psalm we study today, the 51st, David is the prodigal saying, "Father, I have sinned," and in the 32d Psalm he is the son restored to the Father's heart, looking up into his Father's face and saying, "Thou art my hiding-place."

Besides these two Psalms, the 51st and the 32d, five others are included in the group entitled "Penitential Psalms": the 6th, 38th, 102d, 130th and 143d.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Here is a girl arrested for theft, who is a member of a respectable family, and it is her first offense. "Oh, how could I have been so foolish!" she cries. Here is a boy, guilty of forgery, and he too, calls himself a fool and wonders how he could have done it. How common is such an attitude toward sin, the guilty one regarding his sin only as an act of colossal stupidity which has wrecked his reputation in the eyes of others. He has not the first conception of what sin means or of what its consequences are. Genuine repentance is far from him, and the blessedness of forgiveness never comes to his heart. Far otherwise was it with David when he cried,

> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in thy sight.
> Create in me a clean heart, O God;
> And renew a right spirit within me.

Every pupil should learn that sin is an offense against God, and that God only can cleanse the heart and cover the sin. "The essence of religion is a transaction with God; and the essence of the Christian religion is a transaction with Christ."

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: HOW DAVID OBTAINED FORGIVENESS

Lesson Material. Psalm 51.1, 2, 9, 10; Luke 18.9-14.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "The Israelites were besieging a city of their enemy, the Ammonites. One time the Ammonites came boldly into the open fields before the gate of the city and attacked the besiegers. And Joab set his army in battle array against them, and in the foremost rank in the front of the battle he placed a stout soldier named Uriah the Hittite. On the top of the gate were archers, and they shot arrows and drove their enemies back. The arrows flew into the faces of the Israelites like hail driven by the wind. In this encounter Uriah the Hittite was killed.

"Now the day before the battle, Uriah the Hittite had carried a letter from David to Joab, and in the letter, which Uriah could not read, the King said to

the General, 'Let the bearer of this letter be in the forepart of the hottest battle, and when you are attacked draw back and leave him, that he may be smitten and die.' Joab had obeyed the order of the king.

"The reason for the killing of Uriah was this: Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, was very beautiful, and one day, while Uriah was in the land of Ammon fighting for King David, the King saw Bathsheba, and she pleased him much. He determined to have her for his wife. But to do this he must somehow get rid of her husband. Thus he sent Uriah to Joab with the fatal letter."

It is sad to find David, who has been so brave and noble, so thoughtful of his friends and so generous toward his enemies, doing such a wicked deed. But the Bible is always honest, and it tells us about the faults as well as the virtues of its heroes. The thing that David had done displeased God, and he sent Nathan, a prophet, to rebuke him.

Nathan's Parable. There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

This is the story that the prophet Nathan told David the King. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. And then Nathan reminded David of how God had made him king and given him riches, and yet he had coveted the wife of Uriah, and had slain Uriah and married her. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah.

How David Obtained Forgiveness. David needed forgiveness. He was a great man and a great king, but he was a sinner and needed God's forgiveness. Let us see the steps by which he gained it.

By *conviction.* David's sins did not trouble him at first. They did not cause him to lose appetite nor sleep, and he did not cease to enjoy life. But when Nathan told him that parable about the pet lamb, he saw in a flash how mean and cowardly, treacherous and wicked he had been. And there was no more rest for him till his sin was forgiven. That is always the first step towards forgiveness. Until we realize our sin we shall not want forgiveness. Sometimes people live long like David without realizing their guilt. But in some way God brings the sin home.

The next step was by *contrition.* When you do see your sin you may act in various ways. You may grow angry about it. You may excuse it, say it could not be helped. You may say it is past and done with, and try to forget it. You may get depressed and despairing about it—like Judas. You may feel sorrow for it—like David. David's heart was filled with bitter grief. How great his sorrow was we can tell by his language in the Psalms. And this is the next step to forgiveness. Forgiveness can't be had by just saying lightly, "Well, I'm sorry." The sorrow must be as real as the sin, and it must be sorrow not over being found out or over the prospect of punishment but for the sin itself.

Then there comes *confession.* David was always honest and outspoken. "I have sinned," he said. There was no beating about the bush, no attempt to excuse himself. He confessed his sin at once—to his own heart, to the stern yet gentle Nathan, and to God. He prayed for pardon. "Have mercy upon me, O God," he cried.

> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
> And cleanse me from my sin.
> For I know my transgressions;
> And my sin is ever before me.
> Create in me a clean heart, O God;
> And renew a right spirit within me.
> A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

What happened when David confessed? Instantly Nathan answered, "Thy

sin is forgiven." He did not put David on his good behavior saying that if he behaved well for three or six months he would be forgiven. That is not God's way. Forgiveness promptly followed confession. David did not escape punishment. "The sword was to be a trouble in his house for ever," but he was forgiven.

Wash Me, and I Shall Be Whiter than Snow. Snow is the symbol of purity. A teacher asked, "How can the Lord wash our hearts so that they will be whiter than snow?" "I know," was the quick answer of a little boy. "When you look through a microscope at the flakes of snow, there is a dark spot in the centre of each flake. When God washes our hearts, he does not leave any dark spots on them."

Blot out all Mine Iniquities. When the Moravian missionaries first went to the Eskimos they did not find any word in their language for forgiveness. So they had to manufacture a word, and this is it—Issumagijaujungnainermik. A formidable looking word that, but one of beautiful meaning—Not-being-able-to-think-about-it-any-more.

The Joy of Coming Back to God. A child had wandered from her mother's door, pursuing one thing and another, not considering the passing of the minutes or the distance she had gone. But at last she grew tired of playing. She looked up. The sun had set; a wind was rising; the great trees and rocks had assumed a strange solemnity. With a swift-beating heart, she turned and fled homeward. Now, tell me, was there anything in the world or out of it so sweet as the sight of her home there in the near distance and one dear to her coming to meet her in the dusk? That child is the human soul, doomed to go away indeed, but doomed to come back to her mother, to her home, to her God.—John A. Hutton, in At Close Quarters.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Proverbs 28.13.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—John.

Kind hearts are here; yet would the tenderest one
Have limits to its mercy; God has none.—Adelaide A. Proctor.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Pharaoh's butler dream about in the dream he asked Joseph to interpret? (Gen. 40.) 2. What did Pharaoh's baker dream about? 3. Both dreamed about what they were interested in; so did Solomon: what was Solomon's great interest? 4. For what did Solomon ask? 5. Why did his answer please God?

Note-Book Work. XIX. The Lesson Title; Nathan's Parable in your own words; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC: WHAT TO DO WHEN WE HAVE DONE WRONG Or, HOW WE MAY OBTAIN FORGIVENESS

Additional Material: Matthew 18.15-20.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Begin with a review of Nathan's parable and David's confession. Tell your class that although the headings of the Psalms were late additions, this 51st Psalm may well have been David's prayer offered after this event. Explain the Psalm.

All Have Done Wrong. In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Jesus represents the Pharisee as saying: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." In a classification of Pharisees made by rabbinical writers, there is one called The Pharisee who said, "Would that I knew of a sin I had myself committed that I might make reparation by an act of virtue," and there is another called The calculating Pharisee, who said, "My sins are more than counterbalanced by my virtues." There have always been people like these Pharisees. Such was a little girl who was heard to pray, "O God, bless Harry and make him as good as I am!" No wonder that Carlyle was led to say that the greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.

"If I was not a bad boy, I think I was a boy with a great absence of goodness," said Gladstone, looking back upon his youthful days. Are there not many such boys and girls today?

Repentance, Confession, Forgiveness. Just because his aim is nothing less or lower than the Father's love, the Christian confesses and repents as sin all that falls below it. When he speaks an unkind word, or does a mean act, or

shirks a hard duty, or yields to a low temptation, his sorrow is far keener than that of the man who simply does the mean thing but fails to measure it by the perfect standard of the Father's will. The more he enters into that will the more aware is he of his own shortcoming, the less is he puffed up with pride, the more charitable he becomes toward the failings of his fellows. Yet he is not morbid or depressed about his repented sins; for he is as sure that the Father forgives him as he is that he forgives the failings of his fellows.—Dr. William DeWitt Hide, in The Best Man I Know.

False Repentance. "I sat in a home a few days ago, playing with a boy of ten," says Gipsy Smith, "His face was bright as the sun. He looked as happy as any child in the home. Presently his mother had missed something, and she came in and said, 'Jack, have you taken so-and-so?' No answer. 'Jack,' and she came and put her hand on his shoulder, 'did you take—' 'Yes, mother,' and he began to cry. Oh, he was sorry; he did look sorry. He sobbed as though his heart was breaking. What for? He was just as guilty five minutes before, and he knew he was. What made him sorry? Sorry that he had sinned against his mother? No! Sorry that he had sinned against God? No! Well, what was his sorrow? He was sorry, that he was found out."

Deliver me from Bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my Salvation. There is an old poem which bears the curious title of "Strife in Heaven," the idea of which is something like this: The poet supposes himself to be walking in the streets of New Jerusalem, when he comes to a crowd of saints engaged in a very earnest discussion. He draws near, and listens. The question they are discussing is, Which of them is the greatest monument of God's saving grace. After a long debate, in which each states his case separately, and each claims to have been by far the most wonderful trophy of God's love in all the multitude of the redeemed, it is finally agreed to settle the matter by a vote. Vote after vote is taken; and the list of competitors is gradually reduced until only two remain. These are allowed to state their case again, and the company stand ready to join in the final vote.

The first to speak is a very old man. He begins by saying that it is a waste of time to go any further; it is absolutely impossible that God's grace could have done more for any man in heaven than for him. He tells again how he had led a most wicked and vicious life—a life filled up with every conceivable indulgence, and marred with every crime. He had been a thief, a liar, a blasphemer, a drunkard, and a murderer. On his death-bed, at the eleventh hour, Christ came to him and he was forgiven.

The other is also an old man who says, in a few words, that he was brought to Christ when he was a boy. He had led a quiet and uneventful life, and he looked forward to heaven as early as he could remember.

The vote is taken; and, of course, you would say it results in favor of the first. But no, the votes are all given to the last. We might have thought, perhaps, that the one who led the reckless, godless life—he who had lied, thieved, blasphemed, murdered; he who was saved by the skin of his teeth, just a moment before it might have been too late—had the most to thank God for. But the old poet knew the deeper truth. It required great grace verily to pluck the old brand from the burning. It required depths, absolutely fathomless depths of mercy to forgive that veteran in sin at the close of all these guilty years. But it required more grace to *keep* that other life from guilt through all these tempted years. It required more grace to save him from the sins of his youth, and keep his Christian boyhood pure, to steer him scathless through the tempted years of riper manhood, to crown his days with usefulness, and his old age with patience and hope. Both started in life together; to one grace came at the end, to the other at the beginning. The first was saved from the guilt of sin, the second from the *power* of sin as well. The first was saved from dying in sin. But he who became a Christian in his boyhood was saved from *living in* sin. The one required just one great act of love at the close of life; the other had a life full of love—it was a greater salvation far. His soul was forgiven like the other, but his life was redeemed from destructiveness.—Henry Drummond.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.—John.

'Tis not enough to weep my sins,
'Tis but one step to heaven;

When I am kind to others, then
I know myself forgiven.—F. W. Faber.

Repentance is less strong and less beautiful than its elder brother, Innocence.—F. W. Farrar.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are the Books of Kings so called? 2. What is their connection with the Books of Samuel? 3. What is meant by "the great high place"? 4. Where at this time were the ark and the tabernacle? (2 Ch. 1.3-6.) 5. What does 1 S. 28.6 tell us was expected of dreams. 6. What does Solomon mean by his words about himself in verse 7? 7. What is said about Solomon's wisdom in 1 K. 4.29-34? 8. What is the value of wisdom as given in Proverbs 3.13-15? 9. If you were told to ask what you wanted, what would you answer? 10. Do you have the opportunity of making a choice similar to that of Solomon?

Note-Book Work. Part X. David's Prayer for Pardon.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: PENITENCE IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

Additional Material: Psalm 32.5; Proverbs 28.13; Matthew 6.5-15; Luke 11.1-4; 17.10; 18.13, 14; 1 John 1.8, 9.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Commander Evangeline Booth once went to a banker and besought him to lend the money which a clerk had stolen. "I asked him to invest that amount of money in the purchase of a human soul," she said; "and I gave him the promise of the Salvation Army that the amount would be guaranteed and returned to him some day with interest." The banker agreed, but when he learned that the defaulting clerk was one of his own force, he angrily demanded the return of his check. How dared she ask him to help shield a defaulter!

"Who are you," Commander Booth asked, "to sit in judgment on the soul of a fellow man? Who are you to withold mercy, when you are the only one who can administer it? Has there never been anything in your career for which you needed indulgence and forgiveness?"

The question seemed to burn itself straight into his heart. He gave the clerk a full opportunity to make good, and no one ever knew how narrowly the latter escaped disgrace.

"Never was there a man who climbed so high and fell so low as David!" exclaims Dr. Hillis. "Never one whose repentance was more absolute and all-inclusive. Never one who fought his way so persistently back toward the heights where good men dwell. Grateful to God for the lives of all the Bible heroes from Moses to Paul, to the end of time the prodigal and publican will be doubly grateful for the life and career of David, the Old Testament prodigal, who epitomizes for us man's defeat through sin and his recovery also through God's redeeming mercy."

Voltaire and the Fifty-first Psalm. Voltaire once attempted to burlesque the Fifty-first Psalm, and what was the result? While carefully perusing it, that he might familiarize himself with the train of sentiment which he designed to caricature, he became so oppressed and overawed by its solemn devotional tone, that he threw down the pen and fell back half senseless on his couch, in an agony of remorse. This is told as an undoubted fact by Dr. Leander Van Ess. Hence we cannot but admit the depth and fervor of the penitence out of which such a prayer arose.—W. M. Taylor.

God's Mercy. More than any other this Psalm has in every age been the ready expression of those who have been made conscious of their guilt. Out of the depths of self-abasement and despair, they have cried to God as did David, and have found, like him, a mercy wider than the sea. Like the miner, who from the bowels of the earth is able to look up the straight shaft and see the stars even at mid-day, so they are able to discern God's pardoning love and to cling to it. Despite their conscious defilement, they may yet trust his cleansing power, which, expressed in the Word, endures for ever, and to base their prayer upon the certainty of his promise. Note how confident is the Psalmist, although overwhelmed in his own shame—"I shall be clean.....I shall be whiter than snow." He sets no limits upon what God can do for such an one, and he knows that there is no bound to his willingness.

How much clearer is our vision, both of sin and of God, than was David's!

For Christ has revealed the deadly nature of sin and the holiness of God in a way which all who went before him merely hinted at. It is he who has shown that only men who are clad in white can walk with God; that only those who are renewed in his nature can maintain fellowship with his Son; and that only in himself is the immeasurable sin-gulf between God and men bridged. And this is the glory of his Gospel, that every stain may be cleansed in his blood, and that the utterly disqualified soul may be fitted to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light.—J. Stewart Holden.

The Sacrifices of God are a Broken Spirit. The banished Peri in "Lalla Rookh" wandered everywhere, searching for earth's most precious thing, having been told that when she brought it the bar would be lifted. Again and again she brought precious things, but it was only when she bore, last of all, a penitent's tear that the gate of heaven opened to her. The dearest thing on earth to God is a heart broken with sorrow for sin. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."—J. R. Miller.

Wash Me, and I Shall Be Whiter than Snow. In that paper mill I saw reams of red blotting-paper. "Why make red paper?" I asked; "surely white is preferable?" "We cannot help it." "How is that?" "When we get fast-dyed scarlet and crimson rags we cannot take out these colors without destroying the fabrics; we therefore put these by themselves and make them into red paper." I thought our Lord could do what the paper-maker failed to do, and there flashed a new light on an old text: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool" (Is. 1.18).—J. J. Mackey, in Recent Letters of Christ.

The True Nature of Confession and Forgiveness of Sins. What is it to confess one's sin? I think that the complete act includes four parts, all of which are necessary, the absence of any one of which makes the act incomplete. In order to make the matter plainer let us talk, not about sin in general, but about some special sin—say the sin of selfishness. I select this sin for several reasons: first, because it is the commonest sin in lives not openly vicious; second, because it is the one least easily detected and confessed; and third, because in its large scope it includes and embraces every other sin. What is necessary, then, for a selfish man really and truly to confess his selfishness?

1. To own that he has done selfish things. That is the first step to be taken. That is the first struggle. To get at the plain facts; to set out in their array the long line of acts that have not been done from any other higher motive than the mere desire for one's own personal comfort or advantage. Be honest, and when the great procession of a life lived only for your own indulgence—not dissolute, not malignant, not violent or outrageous in any way, only selfish through and through; just exactly such a life as you would have lived if you had come into the world forbidden to do anything for God or fellow-man, and only by an occasional irresistible impulse breaking over the law to serve either—when such a procession of life marches round and round before the inexorable honesty of your self-examination, confession will begin and reach its first stage in the assured conviction of the fact, "I am a selfish creature."

2. Another struggle will come as a man passes on to the second stage, which is the full acknowledgment of the true moral character of such a life. Once convinced that he is selfish, a soul, with more or less consciousness of the sophistry that it is using, almost always sets to work to feel that selfishness is not wrong, but right. "Very well," it says, "I am selfish, I do live for myself; but what then? Whom should I live for? Is not my own interest and good my first care? Who will take care of me if I do not take care of myself? Must not charity begin at home? Is not this the way the world is meant to work, that every man should nurse his own interests, and so, by the development of each, they all should grow?" Unstated, vaguely felt, this is the acted theory of thousands. No man can possibly confess till first he casts this fallacy entirely away. "It is wrong to live to myself; it is not the design of life." Around him he must hear a great long wail of human suffering rising and falling, now wilder and now weaker, but never dying utterly away—the ceaseless claim of needy humanity to be helped by the humanity that has abundance. More quiet, but not less pathetic, he must also hear the longing appeal of what seem the happiest and fullest hearts for sympathy in their joy as others seek it in their sorrow. Let his ears open to the appeals, and his conscience must open too. He will see that no man has a right to shut himself away from those whose life is one with

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his; nay, no man has a right to do any act unless he sees that some one else will be the better or the happier for it as well as he. He will see that selfishness is wicked, and begin to be disgusted at his life, so full of it. He will add to the acknowledgment of the act the acknowledgment of the act's moral character, and his confession will be, not merely, "I have been selfish," but "I have sinned."

3. Then the selfish man passes on to the third step of his confession, which is the acknowledgment that the sin he has committed is an offense against God. Here is the first place where religion necessarily begins. All up to this point may be wholly unreligious. But the confession must be made to some one. What is the authority which has been violated by these acts of yours, which you have decided against as being selfish? The law must come from God. We must be deeply, keenly conscious that every time we have done a selfish act we have broken his distinct commandment. We must have so entire a sense of how utterly he is love that we shall see every unloving thing that we have ever done to be a direct insult to his nature. We must cry as David did in that Fifty-first Psalm, which he wrote about this crime touching Uriah: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." We must say, not merely, "I have sinned," but, "I have sinned against the Lord."

4. And what more is there in the true confession of selfishness? Only one thing, I think, and that is the acknowledgment that the selfish acts which we confess are representations and expressions of a selfish character and heart in which our true guilt abides. Not till a spiritual logic traces back thus corrupt deeds to their source in a corrupt nature; not till "I have sinned" means "I am sinful," is the confession finally complete.

First there is the seeing of the fact, then the acknowledgment of the moral character of the fact, then the owning of responsibility to God for the wrong-doing, and last the consciousness that the wrong-doing is a wrong-being, that the sins are sinfulness. It may come upon a man all in a flash, as it did on David; or it may grow hardly, fought against stoutly, conquering step by step for itself, taking years, perhaps, to get entire possession of the nature. But it must come, and it must all come, or the man's sins are not genuinely confessed.

And what comes then? Ah, here we come to the better news, the glad tidings, the "Gospel" of our sermon. "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan answered, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." Quickly as all God's laws fulfill themselves, quick as the rain-drops catch the sunlight and the rainbow springs to sight, quick as the hillside hears the thunder and answers with its echo, so quick—immediately—the whole forgiveness follows on the whole confession. We need to know how absolute this is. I want to state it in its fullness and invariableness. There is a law in our natures that makes it necessarily certain that if you touch a particular muscle the arm will quiver; if you appeal to a particular feeling the anger will rise and flush the face. Now just so it is a law of God's nature—invariable with a godlike uniformity, more certain than the succession of the seasons or the comings and the goings of the stars—that if a human being touches him with a true confession he must answer with an unreserved forgiveness.

Shall we say that a man must be sorry for his sin and leave it before he can be forgiven? Certainly he must; but that act of converted resolution is included, I hold, in the confession that I have described. If David meant just to go on sinning—killing new Uriahs and taking their wives—Nathan surely would never have accepted his confession. The prophet evidently felt that it included the determination of a better life. But shall we say that this better life must be begun, that some good steps in it must be taken to prove its reality, before a man ought to count himself forgiven? That is not so, for the true ground whereon I trust I am forgiven is not the symptoms that I see in myself. That would make very poor business of my faith and peace. It is the simple belief in the promises of God. Let us not be afraid to be as free as Christ. A whole confession must bring a true forgiveness. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. The moment you cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," the reply is ready: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—Condensed from Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

Penitence and Pardon. Across the Zambesi River, below the Victoria Falls, is a bridge which spans the widest chasm and overlooks the most terrific turmoil of waters to be seen on any river in the world. That bridge was made by building out an arm from either shore and uniting the two out-stretched arms in the

center over the roaring stream. Neither arm could have reached the opposite bank by itself; the two were needed to meet each other. Such are penitence and pardon, which form the bridge across that tumultuous stream and those tumultuous falls which seem to separate the soul from God. At first one is inclined to say, "Why cannot the bridge of pardon be thrown over exclusively from the side of God?" Perhaps others are tempted to say, "Surely the bridge of penitence will span the chasm and bring the soul to the unregarding God." But no; the truth lies here: pardon without penitence is impossible, and penitence without pardon is useless.—Dr. R. F. Horton.

Practical Penitence. For most of us *repentance* is a technical word that has more to do with theology than with everyday life. We repent of our sins when we accept Christ as our personal Savior, but our ordinary thinking associates the act of repentance with great sins and great sinners. We do not realize, somehow, that a conscientious, earnest Christian life is literally paved with repentances for a thousand daily offences, neglects and shortcomings, and that these repentances become effective only as we work them out in a practical way.

We are sorry for the sharp, cutting word that brings that pained look into the face of one we love. But we must do more than be sorry: we must make our repentance practical. Zacchæus, the publican, was soon cured of extortion, we fancy, after he adopted the rule of restoring "fourfold" to the person he had defrauded. That was practical repentance.—Youth's Companion.

God be Merciful to Me a Sinner. "A'm gettin' drousy, an' a'll no be able tae follow ye sune, 'a doot; would ye read a bit tae me afore a' fa' ower? Ye'll find ma mither's Bible on the drawers' heid, but ye'll need tae come close tae the bed, for a'm no hearin' or seein' sae weel as a' wes when ye cam."

Drumsheugh put on his spectacles and searched for a comfortable scripture, while the light of the lamp fell on his shaking hands and the doctor's face, where the shadow was now settling.

"Ma mither aye wantit this read tae her when she wes sober (weak)," and Drumsheugh began, "In my Father's house are many mansions," but MacLure stopped him.

"It's a bonnie word, an' yir mother was a sanct, but it's no for the like o' me. It's ower gude; a' daurna tak it. Shut the buik an' let it open itself, an' ye'll get a bit a've been readin' every nicht the last month."

The book opened at the words "God be merciful to me a sinner."—Ian Maclaren, in The Doctor's Last Journey.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The philosophy of our day is set upon making virtue a relation to society only, and sin nothing more than a violation of social obligations. The psalmist's conception is far higher, vaster, truer. Virtue arises out of faithfulness to our relation to the Creator; whilst, on the other hand, transgression is primarily and chiefly infidelity and hostility toward God. The idea that sin is merely a social wrong leaves God out altogether; but the conception of sin as an outrage on God includes also the idea of the wrong done to humanity.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

2. We must let God teach us that the only way to get rid of our past is to get a future out of it.—Phillips Brooks.

3. Three facts of sin and three facts of salvation. See chapters VII and VIII of The Ideal Life, by Henry Drummond; chapters VIII and XII of Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks; chapter IX of Listening to God, by Hugh Black.

4. David the Poet. See David the Poet and King, by Dr. Hillis.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are the Books of Kings so called? 2. When were they written? 3. What shows the close connection of the Books of Samuel and Kings? 4. What trouble did David have with other sons besides Absalom? (1 Ch. 3.1-9.) 5. Why did David not earlier announce his successor? 6. Why do men put off making their wills? 7. Should rulership be hereditary? 8. Why was Solomon hastily crowned king? (1 K. 1; 1 Ch. 23.1.) 9. Read David's final charge to Solomon and the people, chapters 28 and 29 of First Chronicles. 10. What part have one's waking thoughts in one's dreams? 11. What are some of the things said in Proverbs about wisdom? 12. What words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are recalled by verse 13? 13. What is the highest wisdom?

BEGINNINGS OF SOLOMON'S REIGN

Golden Text

The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding. Job 28.28

LESSON 1 Kings 1.1 to 3.15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 101

1 KINGS 1.4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O Jehovah, my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; 12 behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as did thy father David walk, then I will lengthen thy days. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

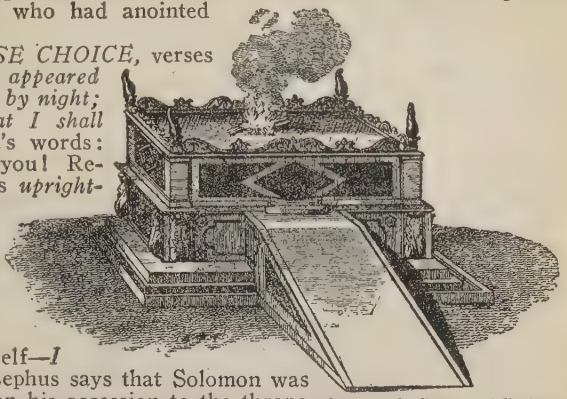
THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

A Prayer Promise of Praise Proficiency and Petition Prosperity

I. SOLOMON AT GIBEON, verse 4. David has died and Solomon has been anointed king. Solomon's first step is to go to Gibeon, *to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place.* The Hebrew word translated *high place* means a Canaanitish sacred spot, or place for sacrifice, located upon a hill-top near a town or village. The Israelites consecrated such "high places" to the worship of Jehovah. The law of Dt. 12.10-14 forbade the worship at high places, restricting the worship to a single sanctuary, but worship at high places was practiced until the time of Hezekiah, 2 K. 18.4. Although the ark stood in a temporary tent at Jerusalem, Gibeon is called the chief high place because there was the tabernacle, the ancient tent of the wanderings. The brazen altar for sacrifices stood in front of the tabernacle (2 Ch. 1.3-5) and *upon that altar a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer.* It was a great assembly and therefore the

large number of offerings; moreover, Solomon wished to display his royal munificence. The offering was made through the priests. The chief priest at this time was Zadok, who had anointed Solomon King.

II. SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE, verses 5-9. *In Gibeon Jehovah appeared unto Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.* Recall Christ's words: Ask, and it shall be given you! Recalling his father David's *uprightness of heart* and God's mercies to him, Solomon first speaks of his own ascent of the throne as a great kindness shown to his father David; compare 1 K. 1.48. Then he speaks humbly of himself—*I am but a little child.* Josephus says that Solomon was only fourteen years old on his accession to the throne, but we know from 1 K. 11.42 and 14.21 that he was already married to Rehoboam's mother. It is generally supposed that he was about twenty at this time. *I know not how to go out or come in,* he adds, a proverbial expression meaning that he knew not how to conduct public or military affairs. With customary oriental exaggeration, Solomon thus acknowledges his lack of experience and his realization of the greatness of the task before him. Compare Jer. 1.6-8.



Altar of Burnt Offerings According to Calmet

"Admit your ignorance, and few will blame you;
Pretend to knowledge, and the world will shame you."

His people, moreover, were *a great multitude that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.* Another hyperbole; perhaps there was here a reference to the promise made to Abraham.

Then Solomon made his famous choice: *Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people.* The *heart* represents the seat of both thought and feeling: "a receptive mind, one that listens and considers before it decides," is what he asked for. "Happy the land whose ruler deems it his highest function to administer justice! Solomon in his dream doubtless expressed his waking and deliberate wish. God giveth to him that hath. Solomon had wisdom enough to make him wish for more"(Wood). *That I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?"* added Solomon. "His prayer exhibits a consciousness that truth and falsehood, right and wrong, are not always easy to distinguish, and that to discern between them there are needed special gifts of the heart and understanding"(Dummelow).

III. THE ANSWER TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER, verses 10-15. "Aristotle says, 'The dreams of good men are better than those of ordinary persons,' and it seems certain that the will is often only partially suspended, even in our natural sleep. Although Solomon's choice was made in a dream, we must regard it as springing from his will in some degree, and therefore as indicative of his moral character." Therefore we are told that *the speech pleased the Lord.*

Because he had not asked *long life* nor *riches* for himseslf, nor *the life of his enemies,* but had asked a gift to be used for his people, *Behold,* said God unto him, *I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart.* These verbs are "perfects of certitude in a divine promise: the action determined upon by the will of the speaker is regarded as already accomplished"(Burney). *So that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.* "At this period the designation *wise* was used in an exceedingly restricted sense; it was applicable to the woman of Tekoah, whose services Joab solicited to gain David's consent to Absalom's recall. Subtle, cunning, keen to perceive that which is not at first apparent, is the meaning. The best illustrations are the stories which are told respecting Solomon, as examples of his remarkable wisdom." See 1 K. 3.16-28.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and

honor—compare Mt. 6.33—*so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee*—compare 1 K. 4.29-34. There was a condition to the next promise of length of days: *If thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments.* Solomon did not fulfil the condition (see 1 K. 11.1-13). He was probably not over sixty at his death.

And Solomon awoke, and, behold it was a dream. In Old Testament times men expected to learn God's will through dreams. Recall Saul's disappointment at not receiving a dream, 1 S. 28.6.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The great high place, verse 4. To select a lofty place for worship was natural to orientals. The Babylonians living in a flat country, built mounds on which they erected their temples. The Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Germans sacrificed on the hills. We are told in the Iliad that the Trojans offered sacrifices to Zeus on Mount Ida. On the snow-covered summit of Hermon are ruins of a very ancient temple where Baal was worshipped.

To judge thy people, verse 9. An oriental monarch is the chief judge as well as the king; to hear and decide cases is one of his most important duties.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who was the first king of Israel? Who first anointed him and under what circumstances? Who was the second king of Israel? In round numbers, what is the date of David's reign? When did Samuel express humility before a great responsibility? When did Saul? When did David?

Adonijah's Rebellion. When David had become old and feeble the question of his successor was still undecided. Ammon and Absalom were dead, and Adonijah was the oldest living son. Adonijah was a man like Absalom, ambitious and scheming. One of the explanations given for his rebellion against his father is that David had not restrained him in his youth. "His father had not displeased him at any time, saying, Why hast thou done so?" Like Absalom, Adonijah assumed the royal state, with chariots and horsemen and runners to go before him. Finally he made an attempt to have himself crowned king. Joab, David's general, and Abiathar, the priest, deserted David and espoused the cause of Adonijah. Adonijah gave a great feast at En-rogel, at which his followers shouted, "God save King Adonijah!"

Nathan informed Bathsheba of these doings of Adonijah and Bathsheba reported them to David, reminding him that he had promised that Solomon, her son, should be his successor. Nathan followed and confirmed her report. Then David solemnly swore to Bathsheba that Solomon should succeed him.

In order to understand the situation we must remember that neither precedent nor law was firmly established so as to settle the royal successorship. Saul and David had been elected by the people. The law of primogeniture would give the throne to Adonijah, and it seems from Adonijah's words in 1 K. 2.15 that the people had looked upon him as the rightful heir. David, on the other hand, claimed the right to choose his successor. "The eyes of all Israel are upon thee," said Bathsheba to him, "that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord and king after him."

The Anointing of Solomon and the Fate of Adonijah. David realized that prompt measures must be taken to assure the throne to Solomon, and he gave explicit directions for Solomon's immediate installation. His orders were carried out; the trumpet blast pealed forth the proclamation to the assembled troops, who shouted back, "Long live King Solomon!" and all the people came back to the palace rejoicing.

Adonijah and his guests heard the trumpet blasts and the uproar in the city, and their feasting quickly ended. The son of Abiathar brought them word of what had taken place. The guests all fled, and Adonijah took refuge in the sanctuary and caught hold of the horns of the altar. To Solomon, who had been borne in triumph to the palace and seated on the royal throne, Adonijah's resolve was brought, that he would not leave his position till Solomon swore to spare him. Had Adonijah been successful in his plans, no doubt he would have put Solomon and Bathsheba both to death, but Solomon magnanimously gave his

word that as long as Adonijah behaved worthily, he should not perish. Adonijah came and bowed himself humbly before his younger brother, hailing him as king.

Full of days, riches and honor, David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead, about the year 970 B. C. Probably the gathering at Gibeon, our lesson today, was the first representative assembly of his reign.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Gibeon was five and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. There are eight springs here, and a large ancient reservoir. Here the tabernacle and the brazen altar for burnt-offerings were brought from their previous resting-place at Nob, and they remained here till removed by Solomon to the temple. North of Gibeon there is a river-bed now called by the Arabs Wady Suleyman (Solomon).

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In the life of every human being volition is the central factor. Even the smallest child has the power to choose. How he chooses is the supreme thing. To influence the volition of pupils is the main purpose of Sunday-school teaching. Events in the history we are studying should be so taught that pupils will naturally choose to follow the right example, to shun the evil example.

Something of Solomon's sense of responsibility in his office all sincere teachers experience. What position is more responsible than that which deals with the formation of character?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Let's suppose. Let us suppose that the opportunity is given us now to choose what we would like most in the world to have, what would it be? There are so many beautiful things that we should find it very difficult to decide which one we wanted most. And then we would have to spend a long time in thinking out which would be best for us to have. We hear today of the wise choice made by Solomon. Whose son was Solomon?

Solomon's Wise Beginning. Solomon was a young man when he came to his father David's throne and he had not long been king when in a dream God tested him. He had gone to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God and that night he seemed to see God and to hear him say, "Ask what I shall give thee." The future looked very bright to young King Solomon, and he might have asked for a long life in which to enjoy it, or for still greater riches, or for one of a hundred other good things. What was his answer? First he thanked God for his kindness to his father David, and recalled his father's goodness—"He walked before God in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart." And then he humbly confessed his own inexperience and the greatness of the task before him as a king, for this is the meaning of his words, "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude." And then Solomon made his great request, "Give me an understanding heart, that I may discern between good and evil." It was a great answer. Most of our troubles, and all our sins, you know, would be avoided if we always discerned and chose the good. You know how Jesus always did this. When tempted in the wilderness he said, "Get thee hence, Satan," and never did he choose evil instead of good.

"We read that "it pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing," and he not only gave Solomon the "wise and understanding heart" which made him famous, but gave him long life and riches as well. You see, Solomon put God rather than self first, and it turned out for him just as Jesus long afterwards said it would for all: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

What Shall I Give Thee? What do you want for your birthday? If you were a little fellow you might answer, "An engine and cars." If you were a small girl, you might say, "A new dolly." The older boy answers, "A new bicycle." Perhaps you say, "I don't want toys or books; I'd like to have some money to spend as I please." These are all good choices in their way.

A little girl had been to a concert to hear a fine singer and in the night she dreamed that a dear old lady said to her: "I have been watching you, and I have come to ask what you would like me to give you." Very promptly the girl answered, "A beautiful voice so that I can be a great singer." Some of you are ready to answer God in the same way. "Give me the talents of an artist, an orator, a great leader." These are better answers, but not the best.

Two people had become firm friends. One was an invalid old man, and the other a bright little girl. The child often went to his house to cheer him up. Her birthday was close at hand, he learned, and he said to her, "What shall I give you?" She thought a moment and then asked, "Are you very rich?" "Yes," he said, "I suppose I am." Then she answered, "Father is in trouble and I am sure it is about money, could you help him?" "But don't you want anything for yourself?" "No, only for father, please." That was an unselfish answer which showed a great love; still it is not the best answer.

There is a beautiful song entitled "The Gift." Here are the words:—

"What shall I give her, O mother mild,
Ask what thou wilt for thy little child.
Shall I kiss her brow that her eyes may shine
With a beauty that men will call divine?
Shall I touch her lips that they may flow
With songs the sweetest the world may know?"
"Nay," said the mother, "that will not stay:
Songs are forgotten and hair turns gray."

"But what shall I give her?" he said again;
"Ask, and thou shalt not ask in vain."
And the mother lifted her eyes above:
"Give her purity, truth and love."
And the Christ Child turned to her soft and mild:
"Thou hast chosen the best for thy little child.
Be not afraid, tho' life be sore
I shall be with her evermore."

Here is one of the best answers that I know. Ask that Christ's presence go with you. You cannot ask for anything better. Out of that will come happiness and usefulness, a noble life and noble service.

A Famous Right Choice and a Famous Wrong One. Hercules, you know, was the most famous of all the heroes of Grecian mythology. Xenophon tells us that in his youth two beautiful maidens came to Hercules. One was named Pleasure and the other, Virtue. The first one offered him a life of ease and delight; the other, a life of usefulness and fame. Hercules chose Virtue, and spent the great part of his life in using his wonderful strength to help weaker people.

The most famous wrong choice we hear about in the Gospels. It is that of the rich young ruler who came to Christ and asked him what he must do to gain eternal life. (Mt. 19.16-22.)

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: 1 Kings 3.9. Or, Ecclesiastes 2.26a.

Look out for choices; they run into habit, character, destiny.—Maltbie D. Davenport.

O youth, with spirit pledged, yet free
To make of life the truest, best,
One sure, safe path there is for thee,
The path our Savior trod and blessed.
There walk, and thou shalt surely find
The truest good—a peaceful mind.—James Buckham.

Teach me in the path of life I shall walk in always to do the thing that pleases not me but thee.—The Prayer Given to Dr. Grenfell by his Mother.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the seventh chapter of Second Samuel tell us about David's plans for building a temple? 2. What did David do with the ark? 3. What reason for building the temple did Solomon give in 1 Kings 15.1-5. 4. In his address to the people, which follows our last lesson text, to whom did he give credit for planning the temple? 5. How long was the temple in building, according

to 1 K. 7.6-38. 6. When did Jesus first visit the temple? (Lk. 2.40-52.) 7. What did Jesus then call the temple?

Note-Book Work. XX. The Lesson Title; the story of Solomon's choice; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: CHOOSING THE BEST THINGS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There is a story told about a man who received from a good fairy the gift of a little blue flower. This wonderful flower opened before him the door of a great treasure house from which he might gather what he could. He gazed around him upon thousands and thousands of jewels of rare size and beauty, and selected with care those which he desired. Well laden and much rejoiced at his good fortune, he turned to leave when he heard a soft voice call to him, "Forget not the best." He turned back, going deeper into the room seeking larger and fairer gems. Well satisfied, he again approached the door, and again the insistent voice, repeated, "Forget not the best." Somewhat mystified he returned, took up the search for yet more costly gems, and at last left the room with the voice still calling after him, "Forget not the best." In leaving he had forgotten the little flower which alone could open this treasure to him.

This story tells in fable what Jesus once told in a single sentence: we find it in his Sermon on the Mount. Who can recall it? "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The story of Solomon's dream has back of it this same thought. Where was he when this dream came to him? Why was he there? What did God tell him to do in a dream? To Solomon's mind must have appeared riches and power and fame and all the golden possibilities before a young man just established on a great throne. What should he ask for? "Let me be wise," was his choice, wise to rule this realm aright, possessed of an understanding heart to judge between good and evil. "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing." Why did God praise his answer? What more did God promise him? In Christ's words "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Another Good Beginning. On January 15th, 1912, when the people of China were celebrating the introduction of the Christian calendar, Dr. Sun Yat Sen said to an American who had offered him congratulations, "I thank you for your kind sentiments, and I hope by obeying the voice of God to give to the people of New China a just and righteous government." Dr. Sun Yat Sen said also, when receiving a beautiful Bible presented by Christian Chinese, "We are trying to build up a New Republic on the principles found in this Book."

We Can Not Choose Not to Choose. Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well-dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a bon-vivant, and a lady-killer as well as a philosopher; a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer; as well as a tone-poet and saint. But the thing is simply impossible.... So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully and pick out the one on which he is to stake his salvation.—Henry James, in Psychology.

The Best Choice. If God says to us, in the bright promise of youth, "Ask what I shall give thee," let us make the best choice, and answer: "Give me grace to know thy Son, the Christ, and to grow like him"; for that is the true wisdom which leads to eternal life, and that is the true royalty which brings dominion over self, and that is the true happiness which flows unsought from fellowship with the Divine Life.—Dr. Henry van Dyke, in Sermons to Men.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Choice and service—in these are the whole of life.—Mark Hopkins.

Choose well; your choice is
Brief but endless.—Gœthe.

The first prayer every youth should send up in commencing his life study is that of the old Latin writer—*Da mihi, Domine, quod sciendum est*—Grant me, O Lord, that I may learn everything worthy of being known.—E. Griffith Jones.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. With what history does First Kings begin? 2. Who are the chief heroes of the book? 3. Read the entire lesson. 4. What reason had David for wishing

to build the temple? 5. What share had he in the work of the temple? (1 Ch. 29.2-5.) 6. What was the condition on which the temple should continue as the house of God? (1 K. 9.1-9.) 7. What is the finest temple in Rome called? 8. In London? 9. What does 1 Cor. 3.17 say about the temple of God? 10. Why are churches and cathedrals made beautiful today? 11. Why was the world so appalled at the destruction of the cathedral at Rheims?

Note-Book Work. The Life of Solomon. Part I: Solomon's Wise Beginning.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: TRUE WISDOM AND HOW TO GET IT

Additional Material: Proverbs 4.1-8; James 1.5-8; 3.13-18.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Sleep ushers you into another realm, and often it is a realm—that is, it is as real as your waking world and more real. Whatever be the principles and laws which govern this strange realm in which we wander we know this, that here some of the profoundest impressions are made upon us, that thoughts come to us then that remain; that light breaks on some deep problem. Such things have been known as the solution of a mathematical problem, or the theme of a great poem coming to a man, as in the case of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," during sleep. It is a department of our mysterious human life whose laws and possibilities have yet to be explored, and there ought to be no difficulty in believing the record before us. Everybody will believe that what is stated to have happened here could easily happen in a dream. This devout young man had been worshipping all day: he had lain down at night with his mind full of thoughts of God—his father's God, the God of the people over whom he had been called to rule. What is with us in our waking thoughts is often with us in our dreams.

What is remarkable is that when Solomon awoke and knew it was a dream he proceeded as if it were all actual fact. The dream expressed the deep desire of his heart, and he believed, and acted in accordance with his belief, that God had spoken to him and answered his desire.—Condensed from The Birth of a Nation, by Charles Brown.

What to You is the Prize of Life? One wonders what would be our response to such a testing challenge were it thrown down to us! Suppose that a great tree of life were before us, and on it were hung such things as riches, honor, pleasure, wisdom, goodness. Which prize would we choose for ourselves and our children? Probably the greatest demand that would be made would be for happiness, freedom from pain or poverty, sorrow or calamity. These are the things we seek, perhaps, above all things. The idea of the majority of mankind is that the chief end of life is to be happy, and I really believe that the chief desire of some of the most unselfish parents for their children is that they shall be happy. They put that before usefulness and before goodness. Nothing matters so long as you are happy. So tasks are relaxed that ought to be enforced, and children grow up self-centered and useless.

Well, happiness is not God's chief purpose for us. His ultimate desire is our blessedness, but his chief end is our goodness; and there is no goodness apart from unselfishness, or apart from usefulness.

Really, however, the challenge given to Solomon is, in a way, before us all. The question, than which there is none so important, is, What shall be the ruling aim of your life? What will you go in for supremely? What desire will you cultivate, and what suppress? The decision and the action go far to determine the real value and worth of life. It is a great question. Would that every one could search his heart with it, with something of the consciousness of God which Solomon had. What is it that I most desire? What to me is the prize of life? —*Unknown.*

What is Better than Wisdom? What is the most precious metal? You answer, probably, Gold. But there are at least eighteen metals which are worth more, that is, they cost more, than gold. The most expensive of all metals is a species of tin called gallium. An ounce of gallium costs ten times as much as an ounce of gold.

A ruby is more precious than gold; it costs far more. Is there any other mineral substance that is worth more than a ruby? Radium is far more costly. We can say that gallium is more costly than gold, but not that it is more

valuable, for it is not used to any extent; but radium is both more costly and more valuable because of its usefulness than are rubies.

Wisdom is better than rubies. Shall we find that wisdom, like rubies and gold, has been outranked by something else? Is there any other quality which a man may possess that is of greater value? To answer this question, we must define wisdom.

First of all, by wisdom we do not mean knowledge. Knowledge signifies apprehension of facts or relations. Knowledge, as Cowper tells us, is the mere material with which wisdom builds. Wisdom always supposes action, and action directed by wisdom: knowledge may never lead to action.

Nor is wisdom prudence. Wisdom has been defined to be "the use of the best means for attaining the best ends." "Prudence is the virtue by which we select right means for given ends, while wisdom implies the selection of right ends as well as of right means." The use of the best means for attaining the best ends must include high mental and moral and spiritual excellence. It must mean ready insight into the will of God and obedience to that will. Can anything be deemed better than this, more worthy of man's highest aim? —Charles Brown, in The Birth of a Nation.

Lincoln Knew how to Get True Wisdom. One night James Murdock, the noted elocutionist, overheard President Lincoln praying. Mr. Lincoln was on his knees before an open Bible, and these were the words of his pleading: "O thou God that heard Solomon in the night, when he prayed for wisdom, hear me. I cannot lead this people, I cannot guide the affairs of this nation, without thy help. I am poor and weak and sinful. O God, who didst hear Solomon when he cried for wisdom, hear me and save this nation."

Germany's False Wisdom. How different from Solomon's course has been the course of the Germans, who enlisted their "gott" to give them riches and the lives of their neighbors, and never bothered about having an understanding heart. Now, as a consequence, they understand nothing outside of Germany, confuse good and bad with horrible consequences, and after a stupendous struggle to beat and rob all creation, find themselves poured over with contempt and dishonor and riveted to poverty for years to come.

An understanding heart! That is the priceless possession. Germany not only has not had it, but has not known it was worth having. "What need to understand that rabble? It is for them to understand me. What I know is knowledge. I am going to teach them all, and charge them all a proper fee."

So she opened her dreadful school and sent its masters out for pupils. And now, after four years of it the pupils are trying to teach her the rudiments of civilization. But it goes hard. Even now, after all the reactions of a ferocious discipline; after battle, murder, want and sudden death, she has not an understanding heart, nor yet knows good from bad, but only wonders what she neglected that she has not won.—Life, 1919.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. How Solomon became king. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon thought of his position as a responsibility for others, not as an opportunity for himself. Everyone's life, however humble, has great possibilities and tremendous responsibilities. These are Dr. N. D. Hillis' words to young men: "Young men, accept responsibility; attach yourself by pledges to every good institution, political, social, literary, and religious; be grateful to the Angel of Responsibility that urges you with swift steps along the highways that lead to happiness and usefulness and character." See chapter VI of New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks.

2. Heavenly Wisdom. See Chapter II of Listening to God, by Hugh Black; Chapter V of New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. With what history does First Kings begin? 2. Who are the chief heroes of the book? 3. Why did David wish to build the temple? 4. What reasons for his being deterred from building it are given in 1 K. 5.3; 1 Ch. 22.8? 5. How did he receive Nathan's message in regard to his project? (1 Ch. 17.16-27.) 6. What did he accomplish for the temple? 7. How long was the temple in building? 8. Besides the temple, what did Solomon build? (1 K. 9.1, 10, 15-19, 24, 26; 10.18.) 9. Summarize briefly verses 12-30. 10. What did the temple do for the Israelites?

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Golden Text

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Isaiah 56.7

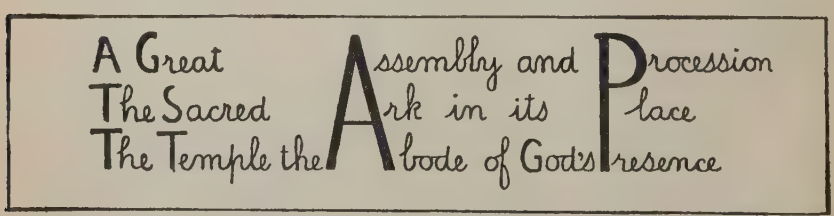
LESSON 1 Kings 5.1 to 8.66 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 100

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 2 Chronicles 2.1 to 3.17; 1 Kings 8.22-53

1 KINGS 8.1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' *houses* of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. 2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. 3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. 4 And they brought up the ark of Jehovah, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; even these did the priests and the Levites bring up. 5 And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be counted nor numbered for multitude. 6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. 8 And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the holy place before the oracle; but they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. 9 There was nothing in the ark save two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of Jehovah, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE GREAT PROCESSION, 1-5. It was during *the feast,* the Feast of Tabernacles which began on the fifteenth of the seventh month and lasted seven days (Lev. 23.34), that *the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes brought up the ark of the covenant out of the city of David, which is Zion.* See the Geographical Background. Two processions advanced from different directions. One came from Gibeon and bore *the tent of meeting,* the sacred tabernacle with its goats-hair covering and boards of acacia wood, *and all the holy vessels that were in the tent of meeting*—the brazen altar, the golden candlesticks, the table of shew-bread, and the brazen serpent. On Mount Zion this procession joined the other which bore the ark away from its temporary tent erected by David. As the two processions proceeded to the temple, *King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him,* were with him before the ark, sacrificing *sheep and oxen, that could not be counted*

nor numbered for multitude. "The road (such was the traditional picture preserved by Josephus) was flooded with the stream of blood. The air was darkened and scented with the clouds of incense; the songs and dances were unintermittent. Onward the procession moved up the slope of the hill. It entered, doubtless, through the eastern gateway. It ascended court after court. It reached the Holy Place" (Stanley).

II. PUTTING THE SACRED ARK IN ITS FINAL RESTING PLACE, 6-8. *The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah*—the ark which had been preserved through the wanderings in the wilderness, the troublous days of the judges, and the warfares of Saul and David—*unto the oracle of the house, to the most holy place.* The ark, you remember, was an oblong chest of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. The oracle of the house, the Holy of Holies, was a perfect cube of thirty feet. In the center of the floor must have protruded the mass of rock upon which we may gaze when we visit the Mosque of Omar, the building that now covers the site. Over the ark were two colossal *cherubim,* fifteen feet high, whose wings met above the center of the ark and also touched the outer walls: 1 K. 6.23-28. On the base of the ark were four legs with rings attached, through which *the staves* were put by which the ark was carried. These were now left within the oracle, their ends just protruding through the door, "in token that their long wanderings were over." *There they are unto this day.* This remark indicates that this account was written while the temple was still standing, and incorporated by the compiler of the book of Kings who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple: see 2 K. 25.8, 9.

Cherubim

III. THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK, verse 10. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone.* Heb. 9.4 speaks also of "a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded," but the next verse says, "of which things we cannot now speak severally": Hebrews then, is incorrect here and the pot and the rod were never in the ark, or else they were lost during the ark's sojourn among the Philistines. The tables of the law in the ark were a constant reminder that God's promises to be with his people depended on their keeping his laws.

IV. THE VISIBLE TOKEN OF GOD'S PRESENCE, verses 10, 11. *The cloud* (see Ex. 29.43; 40.34) *filled the house of Jehovah.* "It produced in the minds of all the nation the thought that God had come down into the temple, and was gladly tabernacled therein" (Josephus). *The priest could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud*—the altar of incense was in the Holy Place.

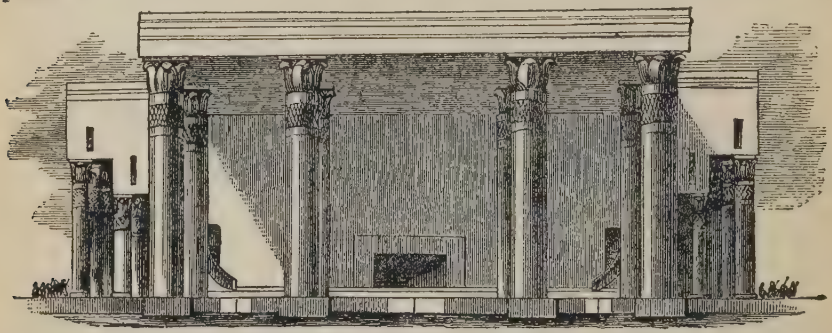
V. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, verses 12-63. "The priests who had deposited their sacred burdens came out of the porch and took up their places in the position which afterwards became consecrated to them—between the porch and the altar. Round about them in the open court stood the innumerable spectators. Opposite them, on the east of the altar, stood the band of musicians, clothed in white. As the priests came out, the whole band of musicians burst forth into the joyful strain which forms the burden of the 136th Psalm: 'For he is good, his mercy endureth for ever.' Then Solomon first took his part in the dedication. Up to this point, he had been seated on the brazen scaffold, his eyes fixed on the temple. Now he rose from his place, and broke into a song, or psalm (1 K. 8.13). Then he turned and performed the highest sacerdotal act, of solemn benediction. The multitude, prostrate it would seem before, rose to receive it. Once again he turned westward, toward the temple. He stretched forth his hands in the gesture of oriental prayer, as if to receive the blessings for which he sought, and at the same time exchanged the usual standing posture of prayer for the extraordinary one of kneeling, now first mentioned in the sacred history, and only used in eastern worship at the present day in moments of deep humiliation. The prayer itself is one of unprecedented length; and is remarkable as combining the conception of the In-

finity of the Divine Presence with the hope that the Divine Mercies will be drawn down on the nation by the concentration of the national devotions, and even of the devotion of foreign nations, towards this fixed locality. Then again the sovereign rose, turned eastward to the people, and bestowed a second benediction. The great holocaust followed. In the whole transaction, nothing is more remarkable than the preëminence of the King himself over every one else. Zadok never appears, the priests are mentioned only as bearers of the ark. Even the prophet Nathan is mentioned only by heathen historians. The King alone prays, offers, blesses, consecrates"(Condensed from Stanley's History).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What happened to the ark in the time of Eli? Who brought the ark to Jerusalem? Where was it placed? Where had it been between the time of Eli and its entrance into Jerusalem?

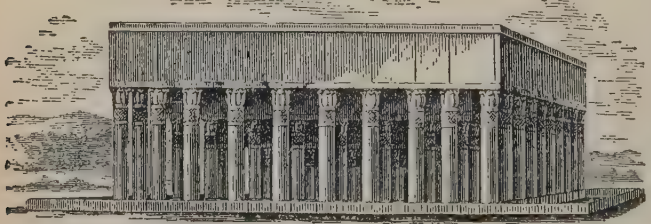
David's Purpose of Building the Temple. After David had built a stately palace for himself, he next purposed building a sanctuary. He himself was



Front View of Solomon's Palace, according to Paine

dwelling in a house of cedar, he said to the prophet Nathan, but the ark of God was housed in a tent. At first Nathan approved of David's plan to build a temple, but after he had thought over the situation and had received divine instruction, he came to David with a different message. It was not God's will that David should build him a house: 1 Ch. 22.8 declares that it was not fitting that the temple should be built by David because he was a man of war. Yet other reasons may have been that the affairs of the kingdom were not yet sufficiently settled to permit David to devote the necessary energy to building a temple (1 K. 5.3), and that it would require all the time and resources at David's command merely to collect materials for the building. David was assured that he should be the founder of a permanent dynasty, and a descendant of his should build the temple.

The Temple Built by Solomon. In 1 K. 5.7 and 2 Ch. 2-4 are accounts of Solomon's league with Hiram, King of Tyre, by which he obtained timber and laborers for the temple, and of his levy of Israelite laborers to prepare the timber and stones, a description of the temple and of the works in brass—pillars, altar, molten sea, etc.—and a list of the golden vessels.



Front View of Solomon's Temple, according to Paine

The Dedication of the Temple. The foundation stone of the temple was laid in May of the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and the building was completed in November of the eleventh year. In October of the year following, at the time

of the Feast of the Tabernacles, it was solemnly dedicated. As the bringing up of the ark to the city of David had been the greatest day in David's reign, so now the dedication of the temple was the culminating glory of Solomon's.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On Mount Moriah, the hill in Jerusalem having the Valley of the Kidron on the east and the Tyropœan Valley on the west, an ample space for the temple was made by building up vast substructures (portions of which are still standing today), and filling in the deep inequalities with "hewed stones." Here, on the rock now crowned by the Mosque of Omar, the temple was erected.

The first verse of our lesson speaks of bringing up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of *the city of David, which is Zion.* The traditional view has been that Mt. Zion was the hill now so-called, the southwestern hill of Jerusalem, west of the Tyropœan Valley, the highest hill of the city; in this case the adverb "up" could be used in the sense that the procession had to descend Mt. Zion and then ascend Mt. Moriah. Recent scholarship holds that David built his city on the site of the old fortress of the Jebusites, the southern and lowest spur of the eastern hill. It is thought that Zion was the name for the whole eastern ridge, whose three separate peaks were called from north to south, Moriah, Ophel, and City of David. On Mt. Moriah was the temple; on Ophel, the royal palace and other magnificent buildings within the wall that enclosed the temple area, and on the southern spur, the city of David.

Assign paragraphs 120 and 122 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Sometimes in former days, a beautiful church was built and the Sunday-school was housed in the cellar. I know of several churches where the cellar is still in use for that purpose. Formerly the sanctuary was made beautiful, but the Sunday-school room was left dingy and unattractive. Fortunately that is now seldom the case. With the years, however, the needs of the Sunday-school have grown. Have you a separate department room? Is it made as bright and attractive as possible? Have you a special class room? Has it comfortable chairs? Are there pictures on the walls? Maps and blackboard ready for use?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Four years after Solomon had been made king, he began to build the temple. It was built of stone, and inside it was made of the beautiful cedar wood, which was later all covered with gold. Before the entrance was a porch and on this porch stood two beautifully carved pillars of brass. In this porch were hung the gilded shields which David had taken from some of his enemies in war and perhaps the sword of Goliath.

And inside the temple, farthest from the entrance, was a small room made of cedar all covered with gold. In this room were placed two beautiful cherubim, or angels, made of olive wood covered with gold. Their wings were outspread and two touched each other in the center of the room, while the other wing of each cherubim touched the wall. A curtain embroidered in blue, purple and crimson, looped with chains of gold, hung at the entrance of this room.

When everything was finished, Solomon called together all the princes and leaders of the people to march in a great procession. Then the priests carried the ark, which contained the ten commandments, from the tent where David had placed it and set it down in the small room at the end of the temple, under the outstretched wings of the cherubim. And when the ark was in its place, a cloud filled the room. Solomon and all the people knelt down and covered their faces, for they knew that God had come to dwell in his House.

The priests and musicians, robed all in white, sang, and played on golden harps or blew on silver trumpets. One of their songs was a beautiful one written by David, which begins:

"Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good;
For his mercy endureth forever."

Then the king, in beautiful embroidered robes, blessed the people, after which he turned towards the altar and, kneeling, he prayed to God. He thanked the heavenly Father for all his goodness to his people and for letting them build this

temple for him, and he asked him to be with them always, to forgive them if they did wrong and to keep them near him. Then all the people had a great feast, lasting seven days, during which they rejoiced that the temple was finished. —Condensed from Old Testament Stories, by Laura E. Craigin.

For What the Temple Stood. It stood for *a son's devotion.* David had planned it, dreamed of it. It was the supreme desire of his life. For years he had gathered material for it, and had accumulated a great store of wood and stone, gold and silver. God let him plan, but did not allow him to build. When he was dead, Solomon said: "My father's dream shall be realized, his purpose shall be accomplished." And as the temple stood there it was a reminder of a son's loyalty to his father's wish.

The temple stood for *a son's utmost.* It would have been easy for Solomon simply to order the work done and then forget about it. Instead, he took charge of it himself, attended to plans and details, sought out the best craftsmen, inspired and encouraged them in their labor. He put himself into it. He took care that neither bad workmanship nor bad material went into the building. It stood for the highest for which he or his resources or times were capable.

We do not always take our work seriously enough. We are often careless and easygoing. If we have something to do for the Christian Endeavor or Epworth League or Band of Hope or Sunday-school class, we fail to put our heart and thought into our task. And then we wonder that our societies don't prosper. How can they, if we do not put our best into them?

The temple stood for *a son's memorial.* Solomon never thought of that. He had no idea he was building his own monument. But he was. This is the thing that has kept his name alive—by which he is remembered. He did many great things in his lifetime. He gave some great judgments, uttered some wise proverbs, made some good treaties, brought peace to the kingdom. But the thing that spread his fame abroad, that lasted the longest, that was the best thing he ever did, was this work for God.

And that is true of us all. We have many things to do, all of them necessary, but the thing that does the most good, by which people will remember us, is the work we do for others and therefore for God.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Psalm 95.6.

St. Paul's cathedral is nothing but a glorified quarry if Christ be out of it, and my old gipsy tent is a cathedral when Christ is in it: Christ makes the temple.—Gipsy Smith.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to see King Solomon? 2. Where was Sheba? 3. What do you think were some of the Queen's questions? 4. What did she learn about Solomon's wisdom? 5. What did she learn about Solomon's riches? 6. What did Jesus say about Solomon as he pointed to the lilies of the field? (Mt. 6.28,29.) 7. What does Prov. 1.7 say is the beginning of wisdom, or knowledge?

Note-Book Work. XXI. The Lesson Title; what David did for the temple; why Solomon built it; how it was dedicated; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: PUTTING OUR BEST INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There are wonderful cathedrals in various parts of the world which are the pride and glory of the people possessing them, but no people anywhere have ever been so loyally devoted to any building as the Jews have been to their temple. While it was standing, three times a year, and especially at the passover season, long trains of pilgrims came from every part of Palestine and from distant countries to worship in its courts. At the present time, every Friday Jews go to the western wall of the enclosure round about the sacred spot where their temple stood, and there they recall its glories and weep and wail over its destruction. The place is called "The Jew's Wailing Place," because of this custom.

What king first thought of building here a magnificent temple? What were his reasons for wishing to build it? Why was he not permitted to carry out his wish? What promises were made to him that more than consoled him for

having to give up his wish? Who did build the temple? What was brought into it?

We Should Honor the House of God. When Sir Christopher Wren was constructing St. Paul's Cathedral in London he had notices posted about the building that any workman heard taking the name of God in vain would be instantly dismissed. Are we as careful to keep sacred our temples of God?

We Should Glory in Our Churches. A Japanese of rank visiting New York was first welcomed by the officials and then escorted through the city to see the sights. At the end of the excursion the Japanese said: "You have treated me with great kindness—showing me your high buildings, your clubs, your banks, your Stock Exchange, your gorgeous hotels, your lovely parks, and the homes of your millionaires. But when you come to Japan I shall take you first to look up our temples and altars. I see clearly that the Americans are not a religious people." "We call the Japanese pagan, but they put us to shame in that they place their temples before the institutions in which we glory."

"I do not understand," says Ruskin, "the feeling which would arch over our own gates and pave our own thresholds and leave the church with its narrow door and foot-worn sill; the feeling which enriches our own chambers with all manner of costliness, and endures the bare wall and mean compass of the temple."

A Builder of a House of God. One Sunday Ellen, looking round after the service was over, saw a strange girl hurrying out. Obeying a sudden impulse, she ran after her. "Please don't go till I say, 'How do you do!'" she cried. The girl stopped abruptly. "I am sorry," she said, "but I had begun to be afraid that no one here cared to speak to strangers." "You see," Ellen apologized, "we're all so excited over our building. We are raising the money ourselves, and it's hard! But come and let me introduce you to a girl you'll love." The other girl laughed, embarrassed. "You couldn't today, thank you. Just now, I don't feel loving. But maybe I'll come back next Sunday. Only please, please tell your church people to remember this: A church isn't a building!" And then the girl was gone.

She was there the next Sunday. Ellen, who was watching for her, slipped into the seat beside her, and her hand gave the stranger welcome. The girl looked at her in pathetic surprise. "Do you really feel that way?" she asked. "I so want to believe you do!" Ellen heard nothing of the sermon that day; she was thinking over and over the sermon the girl beside her had preached. To think that girls like that were slipping away just because everyone was too much absorbed to notice! She could watch for them if she could not do anything else.

Two years later the church was dedicated. Ellen had no money and helped very little,—there were tears in her eyes as she thought how little,—but how she loved it! She was thinking of it all when the girl of two years before came up to her.

"I want to tell you something, Ellen Haworth," she said. "You won't believe it, but it's true. Next to Doctor Brisbane, you built this church." "I," Ellen stammered. "Yes, you. You have made everyone belong. No one ever stood outside a group that you were in. I could count fifty people whose contributions should count to your credit; but that's the least part of it; it's the feeling that's the real thing. And that's what you have given us all."—Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The world has a right to look worshippers, as they come out of church, in the face and ask them: "What do you bring away from your altar, your psalm, your sermon, your benediction? What gifts have you to distribute to your neighbors?"—Bishop Huntington.

"Whosoever thou art that enterest
This church,
Remember it is the house of God:
Be reverent, be silent, be thoughtful;
And leave it not without a prayer
To God,
For thyself, for those who minister,
And those who worship here."

It is a sanctified imagination that invests the church building, whether it be a brick meeting-house or a noble cathedral, with true sublimity; and love to

God, whose house it is, can make the humblest material structure a home of the spirit.—Dr. James Stalker.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What lessons for us has First Kings? 2. What is said about Sheba in Isa. 60.6; Ps. 72.15; Jer. 6.20? 3. What things especially interested the Queen at Solomon's court? 4. What is the meaning of the sentence, "There was no more spirit in her"? 5. What saying of the Queen of Sheba has become a proverb? 6. What good qualities do you see in the Queen? 7. What did Jesus say about the Queen of Sheba? (Mt. 12.42.) 8. What did Jesus say about Solomon? (Mt. 6.29.) 9. Who came to Jerusalem seeking Jesus and having such gifts as the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon? (Mt. 2.11.)

Note-Book Work. Part II. Solomon's Temple.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A HOUSE OF WORSHIP

Additional Material: 1 Kings 8.27-53; Psalm 122.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In front of the church of the Escurial, Spain, overlooking a "Court of Kings," stand six colossal statues of the men associated with the temple at Jerusalem: David the originator, Solomon the founder, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah and Manasseh the restorers or purifiers of the temple worship.

What was David's part in the work? "Thou didst well that it was in thy heart" to build the temple, has been the comfort of many a one since David's day who has planned but has not been allowed to execute some great object. David's son Solomon built this house, partly to carry out his father's wishes, partly to beautify his capital, partly to consolidate his empire, and partly to honor God.

The Temple Compared with Christian Churches. In most outward respects it differed from all Christian churches, though more nearly resembling those of Eastern than of Western Christendom. In the outer courts, the widest difference was caused by the presence of the sacrificial system in the Jewish worship and its absence in the Christian ritual. Every one knows the peaceful aspects of the precincts of a European cathedral. It needs a strong stretch of imagination to conceive the arrangements for sacrifice, which filled the temple courts with sheep, and oxen, and goats, with blazing furnaces, with pools of blood, with masses of skins and offal, with columns of steam and smoke. The clouds of incense, which in a large part of Christendom are used as the innocent symbols of prayers ascending heavenwards, had probably in the Jewish temple the direct object of countèracting the effluvia of these multiplied carcasses. And again, the contrast of the darkness and smallness of the edifice of the actual temple with the light and the size of Christian churches, arose, as a matter of course, from the circumstance that the worship of the Jew was carried on around the altar in the outer court; whereas the worship of the Christian is carried on round the Holy Table within the inner chancel. The Jewish temple would have been contained five times over within one of our great cathedrals. Christian congregations of men, women, and children penetrate, even in Eastern churches, into the interior of the building, where in the Jewish sanctuary none but the Kings and Priests could enter; in all Western churches, into the recesses where even the King and the High Priest could hardly enter.

But there are points of connection as well as points of contrast between the Jewish temple and a Christian church. The very combination of a spiritual religion with material splendor and foreign art in such a building, carried with it the germs of all Christian architecture and the principle of national worship in fixed places, for ever.

"Pull down the nests, and the rooks will fly away," is the well-known maxim which is said to have shattered to the ground the cathedral of St. Andrew's, as well as many a lesser church and abbey, both in Scotland and in England. But Solomon saw that even the splendor of the temple might be a safeguard, not a destruction, of the highest ideas of spiritual worship. There is a superstition in denouncing religious art, as well as in clinging to it. There is no inherent connection between ugliness and godliness. There was a danger of superstition in the rough planks and black hair-cloth of the tabernacle, closer at hand than in the gilded walls and marble towers of the temple. There is a wisdom in the

policy of John Knox; but there is still a higher wisdom in the prayer of Solomon.—Condensed from Stanley's History of the Jewish Church.

The Effect upon the Moslems of the Destruction of the Rheims Cathedral. It was the wrecking of the Rheims Cathedral which shattered the hope of a Holy War on which the Germans had relied, so it has been said. When the news of its destruction reached India, the Moslems asked what kind of people the Germans could be, who had no respect for places of worship and no reverence for God. At Lucknow the Indian National League was formed, and cablegrams were sent to Turkey urging her to stay out of the war. Turkey joined Germany, and then the Indian Moslems refused to coöperate with Turkey, declaring that it was a political and not a holy war.

The Significance of Church Buildings. "Mr. Benjamin Kidd in his famous book Social Evolution uses a graphic method of illustrating his argument. In fancy he accompanies a visitor from another planet as he is shown about our world by a guide, who points out to him every fact and force of our civilization. He visits our cities, our colossal manufactories, our seats of commerce. But what proved the most striking phenomenon of our life was that, scattered everywhere throughout our world, at every turn in our great cities, there were impressive buildings—churches, temples, cathedrals—and crowds periodically thronging them. The author pictures his visitor inquiring into the significance of these buildings, and as being much impressed by what he heard taught in them and by his guide's explanation. They stand for the profound supernatural faith of our race. It is the most impressive phase of our civilization: it is the central feature of human history."

What the Church Stands For. It is a constant reminder of *the presence of God among men.* The meeting house is a symbol of the Church and calls to worship. The Sabbath bell is an invitation to all men to come together as children of the Father of us all and unite in listening to his Word and voicing common worship and praise. The Church as an organization and a congregation is essential because our religion is essentially social. We cannot live a full and normal Christian life in solitude.

The apostle Paul gives us the most significant figure for the Church when he calls it "the body of which Christ is the head." Just as Christ when on earth had a body which was his means of expression and action, so the Church today is *the present-day incarnation of Christ.* It is an imperfect body, but he uses it to speak to the world and to carry forward his service.

The Church *stands for service.* A church is not a social club and in so far as any assembly approaches that nature it falls short of being a true part of the Church. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is the golden rule for the body, the Church, as well as for the individual Christian. Therefore every true church is missionary.—Condensed from an article in The Congregationalist, by P. T. Farwell.

A Sign of Failing Faith. When a man can willingly forego the outward services of religion, and stay away from the house of God, and let the seasons of devotion and communion pass by without a thought of regret, his faith and love must be at a low ebb. A living plant seeks water: a living soul longs for the refreshment of the sanctuary.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The size, beauty, appointments, and worship of Solomon's temple. See Chapter XXVIII, Vol. II of Stanley's History of the Jewish Church; The Temple and its Services, Edersheim; Hastin's Bible Dictionary, Article "Temple."

2. Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it, Ps. 127.1.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What part of First Kings is monotonous and what parts are told with dramatic power? 2. What are the lessons for us? 3. How may Solomon's fame have reached the Queen of Sheba? 4. What were several objects which the Queen of Sheba had in view in making her visit to Solomon? 5. What is meant by "hard questions," verse 1? 6. What is said about Solomon's wisdom in Prov. 3.13; Eccl. 7.11-12? 7. What is wisdom? 8. What does 1 Ch. 29.25 say about Solomon? 9. How is Solomon's house described in 1 K. 7.1-12? 10. How did the queen react to what she saw and learned? 11. Israel's material prosperity was at its height under Solomon: was her real greatness also? 12. What makes a nation great?

THE GLORY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN

Golden Text

Blessed is every one that feareth Jehovah,
That walketh in his ways. Psalm 128.1

LESSON 1 Kings 10.1-13, 23-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 2.2-4

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS 1 Kings 9.1-28; 10.14-29

1 KINGS 10.1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions. **2** And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. **3** And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not. **4** And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, **5** and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. **6** And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. **7** Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. **8** Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom. **9** Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do justice and righteousness. **10** And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug-trees and precious stones. **12** And the king made of the almug-trees pillars for the house of Jehovah, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for the singers: there came no such almug-trees, nor were seen, unto this day.

13 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. **24** And all the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. **25** And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, and armor, and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year.

26 And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. **27** And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. **28** And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; and the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

The Quest of the Queen of Sheba — The Gifts and the Greatness of SOLOMON

I. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON, verses 1, 2. Many queens have ruled in Arabia, and several are mentioned in the Assyrian scriptures. *The Queen of Sheba* ruled over the Sabæans, it is believed: Sheba is mentioned in Gen. 10.28; Jer. 6.20; Ezek. 27.22; Isa. 60.6; Ps. 72.15. This queen *heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah.* Solomon's name had become known far and wide through his trading-ships, which had been to Ophir, Arabia (1 K. 9.26-28), and in this way the fame of the great temple had been spread abroad, which he had built to the honor of Jehovah. When the queen heard of Solomon's fame, *she came to prove him with hard questions.* Recall the lesson which Jesus drew from her coming: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here," Mt. 12.42. Her visit is mentioned in the Koran, and the Arabians and Abyssinians have their legends concerning it. By *to prove him with hard questions* the thought is believed to have been *to test him with riddles,* as the Septuagint Version translates the Hebrew. In Judges 14.12 the same Hebrew word is used for Samson's riddles.

An Ethiopian Princess Traveling in a Car Drawn by Oxen, with a Driver and a Footman

She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, or retinue, *with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones.* "The choicest spice, frankincense, has been proved to be indigenous in Arabia (Yemen): it is also spoken of as imported from Sheba, though this may mean only *through* Sheba" (Wood). Other spices which she brought were doubtless myrrh, ladanum, tragacanth, cassia. Several ancient writers speak of the gold and silver mines and precious stones of the Sabæans. The onyx and the emerald are still found there.

II. THE QUEEN'S ASTONISHMENT AT THE GREATNESS OF SOLOMON'S RICHES AND WISDOM, verses 3-9. The Queen gave good heed to *all the wisdom of Solomon* (See 1 Ch. 29.25; Prov. 3.14-18; and Light from Oriental Life), *and the house that he had built.* His palace is described in 1 K. 7.1-12. *And the food of his table* surprised her; as Matthew Henry observes, "When she saw the food perhaps she wondered where there were mouths for all that meat, but when she saw the multitude of his attendants and guests she was as ready to wonder where there was the meat for all those mouths." In 1 K. 4.22, 23 we are told that his provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and three-score measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, one hundred sheep, besides harts and roebucks and deer and fowl. Some one has estimated that 48,000 people must have been fed! Other matters that amazed the queen were *the sitting of the servants, and the attendance of his ministers,* the officers who sat at his royal table, *and their apparel.* The stately guard that lined the way when Solomon left the palace were all armed with shields of gold, and Josephus adds that the drivers of Solomon's swift horses had gold dust sprinkled in their hair every day, "so that their heads sparkled with the reflection of the sun-beams from the gold." The last thing noted in the account is *his ascent by which he went up into the house of Jehovah.* Solomon had a special covered approach from his palace to the temple, 2 K. 16.18. All this magnificence had its effect upon the queen, *there was no more spirit in her,* she had no wish to test him with further questions.

What she said to the king we are next told. *Behold the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard,* she exclaimed: Solomon surpassed a great reputation, the queen's astonishment knew no bounds, she allowed her admiration to kill possible envy. *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continuously before thee and that hear thy wisdom,* she declared. Later Israelites looked back to the reign of Solomon as a time of the greatest national well-being. *Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who de-*

lighteth in thee, she continued. *Blessed* here means *worthy of praise;* "it is an affirmation rather than a wish."

III. THE INTERCHANGE OF GIFTS, verses 10-13. It was customary to bring gifts to a king, and the queen gave Solomon *a hundred and twenty talents of gold,* in intrinsic value between three and four millions at that time, but far greater in purchasing power: *of spices very great store:* Josephus says it was this queen who introduced the shrub of the Arabian balm into Palestine; compare Isa. 60.6; *and precious stones.*

Verses 11 and 12 are parenthetical, the mention of the abundant gifts of the Queen of Sheba leading the writer to chronicle the articles brought to Solomon in the ships of Hiram.

In exchange *Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.* "The word *royal* is well chosen, for we think of something which is great when we apply this term to it. It is this excess of giving, beyond that which is demanded of us, which makes the real generosity" (McKenzie).

IV. SOLOMON'S ABUNDANCE, verses 23-28. These verses sum up what has already been said about Solomon's greatness and riches. His fame had spread so that *all the earth sought his presence,* and in accordance with oriental custom, *they brought every man his tribute,* or presents. So rich did he become that, in the extravagant language of the orient, in his day *silver* was as common *as stones, and cedars* for building purposes which came from far-away Lebanon as plentiful as the common *sycomore trees* of their own lowlands.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

To prove him with hard questions, or riddles, verse 1. According to Josephus, Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre, propounded riddles to each other, the one who failed to guess the riddle having to pay a fine. In Esdras 3 the young men of Darius' court utter "sentences" and then prove them. Many are the riddles whose solution has been ascribed to Solomon. One of the commonest is his being asked to distinguish at a distance between a bunch of natural flowers and another of artificial, which he did by having the windows opened and allowing the bees to come in, who alighted only on the natural flowers.

Impatient at the trying reticence of the sacred record as to the "hard questions," oriental ingenuity supplied the following tradition: Five hundred boys dressed in girls' clothes, and as many girls in boys' clothes, were presented to Solomon, with the request that he would tell which were boys and which were girls. This he unerringly did, by saying that those who tucked up their sleeves to the shoulder and washed their arms were girls, while those who merely dipped their hands in water were boys. He was requested to thread a diamond cut through in zigzags. This he did by making a worm with a thread in its mouth pass through the stone.

There came no more such abundance, verse 10. "Such gifts must have taxed in those days, the richest of the rich. It is known that some orientals part with the most precious of their possessions, and run themselves into debt, in order to excel in the display of hospitality."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Under what circumstances did Solomon ascend the throne? When told in a dream to ask what he would have, what was his choice? What commendation of his choice did he hear? What did our Golden Text for that lesson say is the beginning of wisdom? What were the greatest events in Solomon's life?

Solomon's Commerce and Foreign Alliances. "Solomon's defensive policy was supplemented by diplomacy," writes Professor Kent in his History of the Hebrew People. "Alliances, far more than conquests, were conducive to the realization of his ambitions; accordingly, the friendly relations which had existed between Hiram of Tyre and David of Israel were cemented even more closely by his son. The Israelites had for barter the grain and wool which their trading neighbors needed; the Phœnicians, on the other hand, were in possession of the arts and products of that ancient civilization with which the Hebrews were still unfamiliar, and which was absolutely essential to the carry-

ing out of Solomon's building enterprises; consequently, the alliance was commercial in its nature and mutually profitable to both peoples. The greater advantage naturally accrued to the Israelitish King, for his wants were more imperative. The Hebrew historian also states that Hiram of Tyre was dissatisfied with the cities of western Galilee, which Solomon ceded to him in return for his services (1 Kings 9.10-14). With the assistance of the artisans and sailors furnished by his Syrian ally, Solomon was able to build ships at Ezion-geber, on the Gulf of Akabah, and to send them out to engage in trade with the rich East.

"Without much doubt, the aim of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon was to establish a commercial treaty between the two peoples whom they represented; for Arabia, with its spices and precious stones, had much to export which the Hebrews were eager to secure."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Sheba was in the South, that is, south of Judea. Many scholars believe that the Queen of Sheba was queen of the Sabæans, a people of Arabia Felix, towards the southern extremity of the Arabian Peninsula. It was a journey of some fifteen hundred miles from there to Jerusalem, and by camel train would take at least seventy-five days.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Christ commended the Queen of Sheba for her search for wisdom. It has been shown that her course possessed the characteristics of all search for Divine wisdom: 1. Inquiry (verse 1); 2. Conviction (verse 4); 3. Confession (verse 6); 4. Praise (verse 9); 5. Fruit-bearing (verse 10). How far upon this course have you led your pupils?

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The first thing that is told us concerning the Queen of Sheba is this, that she had heard in Sheba concerning the Name of the Lord. Well, it must have all come about somewhat in this way. Some of those merchantmen who went down to the Red Sea in ships, and did business for Solomon all along its shores in gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes, and peacocks, and almug-trees, and what not, must have had one of their ships driven in for want of fresh water near the summer palace of the Queen of Sheba. And as the seamen of Israel filled their water-pots, it was an ordinance that they should sing, saying, "Spring up, O well; in the Name of the Lord, spring up!" When who should pass by but the Queen of Sheba herself with her maidens with her? "Sing still another of the songs of Zion," she said to Solomon's sailors. At which they sang a psalm that a prophet who was in their ship had taught them to sing on the occasion of a great tempest they had just passed through. "These see," they sang, "the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and he bringeth them out of their distresses. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" And then, at the Name of the Lord, and without being told to do it, all the seamen standing on the shore lifted up their hands to heaven and proclaimed the Name of the Lord, and worshipped, saying, "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious." And ever after that day the Queen of Sheba watched at her window for the ships of Solomon, till, above all else, the Name of the Lord took entire hold of her heart. The Queen of Sheba had lords many and gods many of her own. She and her people had their gods of the sea and their gods of the land; their gods of war and their gods of wine; their gods of the night and their gods of the day, and many more. But there was no name of any god given in Sheba that took such a hold of the Queen of Sheba's heart as did the Name of the God of Israel. At last she took a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones, and went to Jerusalem.—Condensed from Bible Characters, by Dr. Alexander Whyte.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon. It was a long journey, and it meant fatigue, hardship, perils. Probably her friends told her that no one could possibly be as wise as Solomon was said to be and urged her not to go. But she was an *earnest* seeker after truth, and she refused to be dissuaded. She believed Solomon was the man who could tell her what she wanted to know, and she started off to see him.

The journey over, she found herself face to face with the wise king. Then she showed herself an *honest* inquirer. She did not mind telling Solomon that she had doubted the reports of his wisdom. And she did not mind telling him all that was in her heart, the thoughts, questions, problems that had troubled her. It is said of the disciples of Jesus that at one time they "were afraid to ask him". There were questions which they did not have the courage to put to him. But the Queen of Sheba was not too timid to ask about what she wanted to know. Perhaps she asked Solomon the secret of Israel's greatness, and he told her how God had led his people. Perhaps she wondered at his wisdom, and he told her of that night at Gibeon when God had offered him whatsoever he might ask, and he had asked for wisdom that would fit him to rule his great people.

The Queen was a *receptive* enquirer. It is true that she went to Solomon in a challenging mood, determined to put that much-heralded wisdom of his to the test. But her attitude was not that of hostility or defiance; rather was it of readiness to hear and accept truths. She had an open mind and heart, and was eager and anxious to receive what knowledge he had to give her. She was like a prepared negative ready to absorb and retain whatever picture the light of his wisdom could give.

She was a *satisfied* enquirer. Solomon surpassed all her expectations. She found his fame was merited. He had a satisfying answer for every question, help for every difficulty, a solution for every problem. Earnest and honest and willing, she had her reward—she was not sent empty away.

And she was a *gratified* enquirer. No one could have been more generous in expressing her gratitude. First she praised Solomon—declared the half had not been told her of his wisdom and glory,—and added that it was a happy thing even to be his servant. Then she made him splendid presents. After this she disappears—goes back into that mysterious land of hers, where we hope she put her new wisdom to good use.

"I want to know"—of course you do, and so do we all. We are eager to know about many things, but are we as eager to know the truths about Christ and salvation, the highest knowledge of all? If so, let us seek it and in our inquiry be as earnest, honest and receptive as the Queen of Sheba was.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Jeremiah 9.24.

Whence then cometh wisdom?
And where is the place of understanding?
God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding.—Job 28.20, 23, 28.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. From what book of the Bible is our lesson? 2. Who wrote many of the proverbs in this book? 3. What are some of the woes and sorrows caused by strong drink which our lesson mentions? 4. What additional ones can you think of? 5. How is wine like a serpent? 6. What is a glutton? 7. What is the harm of gluttony? 8. What does the word *intemperance* mean? (Dictionary). 9. Can one be intemperate as to anything else besides food and drink?

Note-Book Work. XXII. The Lesson Title; why the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon; what she learned; what she said; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE CLIMAX OF ISRAEL'S GREATNESS Or, WHAT MAKES A NATION GREAT?

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson.

Question. What are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise?

Answer. The ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the

summer: the conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks: the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands: the lizard taketh hold with her hands, yet is she in kings' palaces.

Can you guess where this hard question and its answer may be found? In the book of proverbs. Perhaps some of the hard questions which the Queen of Sheba propounded to King Solomon were like this. She came to Jerusalem to prove him with hard questions: why?

Solomon's Glory. "Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," said Jesus as he pointed to the lilies of the field. The anemones are the "lilies of the field" in Palestine, and I was told there that the common name for these flowers is "the king lilies." How fitting it was that Jesus should compare the array of Solomon to that of "the king lily"! Perhaps it is this comparison which leads us to think more often of Solomon's glory than of anything else connected with Solomon, than even of his far-famed wisdom.

The contrast between the life of King Saul and King Solomon is startling. Saul was king of a nation of peasants; Gibeah, his capital, seems to have been but an ordinary village; in his dwelling-house he lived very simply; he himself was rude and superstitious. Solomon was king of a great nation; Jerusalem, his capital, was a walled citadel; in a magnificent palace he lived sumptuously, a typical oriental monarch. Only fifty years after Saul's death, Solomon's glory was the wonder of other eastern nations. What would Saul, fresh from his father's farm, have thought of Solomon's magnificent royal state?

The Downfall of Solomon and his Kingdom. Our lesson text of today depicts the climax of Israel's greatness. Solomon's last years were a contradiction of his first years. His "enthusiasm for humanity," when he prayed for wisdom to rule his people wisely, "was supplanted by enthusiasm for money," and it came to pass, when he was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, 1 K. 11.4.

"Hated by his people for the heavy burden of taxation which he was forced to lay upon them for the support of his costly household, turned hither and thither by wives who neither understood his wisdom nor cared for his greatness, but only for his gold, worshipping at the shrines of a hundred gods, in none of which he believed—what an old age is this! It is the very mockery of greatness, the supreme irony of fate, that the hoary head of the wisest of monarchs should be crowned by his own hands with the cap of a fool. And all this because he did not understand that to guide one's own life is a harder and more perilous task than to rule a kingdom."

On the death of Solomon the glory of his kingdom was departed and it fell a prey to dissension which led to its division into two separate kingdoms.

Blessed is Every Nation that Feareth Jehovah, that Walketh in his Ways. It is the duty of nations as well as men to own their dependence on the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.—Abraham Lincoln.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Our Country.

Great, without seeking to be great
By brand of conquest; rich in gold,
But richer in the large estate
Of virtue which thy children hold,
With peace that comes of purity,
And strength to simple justice due:—
So runs our loyal dream of thee;
God of our fathers, make it true!—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is intemperance? 2. Against what two particular kinds of intemperance is a young man warned in our lesson? 3. What effect has the drinking of liquor upon the intellect? 4. Upon the physical condition? 5. What is the meaning of the word *contentious?* 6. What sorrows come to the home of a drunkard? 7. To what crimes does drunkenness often lead? 8. What is the harm of gluttony? 9. Do you need to be warned against excess of any sort?

Note-Book Work. Part III. The Glory of Solomon's Reign.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: TESTS OF NATIONAL GREATNESS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "The people of Central Africa today have a curious adjective, the most wonderful adjective ever qualifying a noun, and it means 'the half has not yet been told,'" writes Dan Crawford, the great African missionary. "It is spelled *kuti*, and when it is joined to such noun phrases as God's wisdom, God's love, or God's power, it means, respectively, 'the-half-hath-not-been-told' wisdom, or 'the-half-hath-not-been-told' love, or power."

The Queen of Sheba came from Africa, and first used this expressive sentence, now become a proverb. What led her to make this declaration? What indications of national prosperity did she find at Jerusalem? How did Solomon's reign compare with the preceding one? With following reigns? Was Israel truly prosperous in Solomon's time? How did he obtain the money for his splendor? To what did his extravagances lead? How did he depart from righteousness in his old age? What befell his kingdom?

The Advantages of Prosperity. The period of Solomon's reign was the period of the greatest commercial, political and intellectual splendor that Israel knew. In that reign the nation reached its highest point in material wealth and national influence.

In our personal life we also have spaces of prosperity. As Christians we are sometimes disposed to look with suspicion on wealth and greatness. But in its proper nature, in its legitimate influence, in its divine design, prosperity must be regarded as a blessing. One of Emerson's ancestors was in the habit of praying that none of his posterity might be rich. It is easy to imagine a man offering a prayer like that for his posterity, although it would be a rather shabby thing to do, but you will hardly find a sane man offering such a prayer for himself. Terrestrial prosperity is still one of God's benedictions.

Prosperity is a blessing, as it widens the range of our physical enjoyment, gives freer play to our intellectual powers and renders possible a fuller intellectual life, gives opportunity for the expression of higher character, and enables us to act out more fully our nobler aspirations. So we have much to be thankful for when our ships return with gold and ivory and spices. They ought to bring pure pleasure, brightened intellect, nobler character, larger usefulness. —Condensed from Lessons of Prosperity, by W. L. Watkinson.

The Perils of Prosperity. The ships of Solomon brought ruin; so did the ships of Carthage, of Greece, of Rome; so did the rich argosies of Spain. The other day in Whitby they showed me the ruins of the grand old Abbey. On the south aspect the wall is much more dilapidated than on the north, showing, it would seem, that the light of the sun had been more destructive than all the wild storms of the North Sea. So the sun of prosperity has often proved more fatal to empire than the bitterest tempests of danger and want and conflict.

We have seen that the prosperity of Solomon wrought evil and soon passed away, and as the material glory of Israel was eclipsed, so has it been with other civilizations. Is this to be the outcome of our prosperity? It need not be so, for Christianity brings us some new ideas and ideals, and if we are true to these our faith shall be on all our glory a defence.

Christ has given us a nobler conception of ourselves and of the end of human life. He has taught us the preëminence of character; he has profoundly convinced us that in the life of the highest righteousness shall we find the highest glory and happiness of being. If our prosperity is to serve us and not to harm us, we must fix our thoughts, our affections, upon things above. We must maintain the spirituality of life, seek to be rich toward God, be strenuous candidates for the crown of righteousness.

Christianity also gives us a social ideal of prime interest and efficacy. The curse of the old civilizations was selfishness. "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water:.....I got me servants and maidens:.....I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold:.....I gat me men singers and women singers.....So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem"(Eccl. 2.4-9). The *I's* stand up like a regiment of Grenadiers. Here was the curse of the old nations, in the flush of their power and prosperity. Here is the curse of much of the

prosperity of today. Selfishness is the rock on which rich argosies suffer shipwreck, the rock on which the grandeur of nations and the happiness of men go to pieces. Christ changes the *I* into *we*, the *my* into *our*. He teaches us in his large doctrine and grand example to live for others. This spirit of unselfishness shall save us personally and nationally.—Condensed from Lessons of Prosperity, by Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

America's Prosperity.

They tell me thou art rich, my country: gold
In glittering flood has poured into thy chest;
Thy flocks and herds increase, thy barns are pressed
With harvest, and thy stores can hardly hold
Their merchandise; unending trains are rolled
Along thy network rails of East and West;
Thy factories and forges never rest;
Thou art enriched in all things bought and sold!

But dost thou prosper? Better news I crave;
O dearest country, is it well with thee indeed, and is thy soul in health?
A nobler people, hearts more wisely brave,
And thoughts that lift men up and make them free,—
These are prosperity and vital wealth!—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

Theodore Roosevelt's Idea of National Greatness. Never yet was a country worth living in unless its sons and daughters were of that stern stuff which bade them die for it at need; and never yet was a country worth dying for unless its sons and daughters thought of life, not as something concerned only with the selfish evanescence of the individual, but as a link in the great chain of creation and causation, so that each person is seen in his true relations as an essential part of the whole, whose life must be made to serve the larger and continuing life of the whole.

In What Respects America is Great. I believe in America because of her Ideals, worked out in institutions that are just.

She gives to everyone the right to rise;
To take a part in making equal laws;
To hold his neighbor equal to himself;
To speak the truth and to resent a lie;
To serve no man as master, but by toil to earn
The right to call himself a man.

I believe in the world mission of American Ideals. By them, expressed in terms of nations:

Right can be made to vanquish Force and Fraud;
Justice to reign, sustained by potent law;
The weaker states to live as live the strong.

I believe in America because she thinks in terms of justice, not of gain, and holds her noble heritage the right of all.—R. M. McElroy.

For Enlargement or Discussion. The kind of wisdom shown by Solomon. Professed thinkers do not always become well known, but men who have a practical philosophy which acts for their worldly success and which gathers up into striking expression the hardy wisdom which ordinary minds feel, but cannot express, is the type of intellectual power which becomes extensively known. The people wondered at the wise sayings of Solomon and treasured them as jewels of understanding.—Bishop F. J. McConnell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Book of Proverbs? 2. What practical teachings has the book? 3. What is your favorite proverb? Why? 4. What is a proverb? 5. Why do men want intoxicating drinks? 6. What is the greatest reason for prohibition in our country? 7. After the Federal Prohibition Law went into effect, what hardship came to bartenders, saloon owners, brewers, glass workers, barrel makers, transportation agents formerly connected with the liquor business? 8. What good came to the country by the passage of the law? 9. What are we doing in our town to make up for the social life which the saloon formerly gave its patrons? 10. What progress has the temperance movement made in countries other than our own? 11. What is the condition of the rum trade in Africa? 12. What do you think of those traders?

EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE

Golden Text

The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty. Proverbs 23.21

LESSON Proverbs 23.19-21, 29-35 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 1

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Daniel 1

PROVERBS 23.19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thy heart in the way.
20 Be not among winebibbers,
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:
21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty;
And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.
29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?
Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?
30 They that tarry long at the wine;
They that go to seek out mixed wine.
31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it sparkleth in the cup,
When it goeth down smoothly:
32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder.
33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things,
And thy heart shall utter perverse things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea,
Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say,* and I was not hurt;
They have beaten me, and I felt it not:
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Exhortation
Excellent
Effect of

Persuasion and
Picture of a
Persistent

Denunciation
Drunkard
Drinking

I. EARNEST ADVICE, verses 19-21.

II. A STARTLING PICTURE OF A DRUNKARD, verses 29, 30. By a series of questions the drunkard is vividly brought before our eyes. *Who hath Oh! Who hath Alas!* the Hebrew literally reads, for the words translated *woe* and *sorrow are* interjections, not nouns. Woe and sorrow come to every one sooner or later, but the drunkard creates them for himself. *Who hath contentions? Who hath complaining?* Drunkenness embroils men in quarrels and strife. *Who hath wounds without cause?* Drunken men come to blows over nothing, without knowing why or wherefore. *Who hath redness of eyes?* Bleared eyes are one of the conspicuous signs of the drunkard.

These questions are now answered: all these evils befall those *that tarry long at the wine;* them *that go to seek out mixed wine.* "There is a touch of sarcasm in this; the word elsewhere used of diligent search after knowledge is here used, as if ironically, of the investigations of connoisseurs in wine, meeting to

test its qualities"(Plumptre). It is suggested that by mixed wine may be meant wine mixed with spices or with opiates.

III. THE APPEARANCE AND THE EFFECT OF WINE, verses 31, 32. The writer now counsels every one to keep away from temptation. *Look not upon the wine when it is red:* "Critics judge of wine, among other indications, by the color of it; some wine, they say, looks so well that it even says, 'Come and drink me'"(Matthew Henry). "Nor *when it sparkleth in the cup:* literally, *when it gives its gleam,* or *eye, to the cup,* that is, when it is full of life"(Toy). Nor when *it goeth down smoothly:* see Song of Solomon 7.9. But the wine which fascinates like a serpent, is also as poisonous as a serpent: *at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.* "Take heed of the bait, for fear of the hook."

IV. FURTHER PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF WINE DRINKING, verses 33, 34. It is seemingly delirium tremens the writer describes now: *thine eyes shall behold strange things, and thy heart shall utter perverse things:* "things contrary to reason, religion, and common civility, which one would be ashamed to speak if sober. What ridiculous, incoherent nonsense men will talk when they are drunk!" *Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.* "Drink stupefies and besots men. Their heads are giddy, their heads swim, and when they lie down to sleep they are as if they were tossed by the rolling waves of the sea, or upon the top of a mast"(Henry).

V. A DRUNKARD'S SOLILOQUY, verse 35. On awakening the drunkard thus soliloquizes: *They have stricken me, and I was not hurt: they have beaten me and I felt it not.* "Drunkenness turns men into stocks and stones; they are scarcely to be reckoned animals; they are dead while they live." "That we should with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts! To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast!"(Shakespeare).

With difficulty the drunkard shakes off his drunken stupor: *When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again*—"The time seems long before the drunkard fully awakes from the slumber after his debauch, in order to return to the orgies of yesternight"(Wordsworth).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They that tarry long at the wine, verse 30. Among the Egyptian papyri there is one as old as 3,600 B. C., on which we find among other moral aphorisms a warning against wineshops. "My son," it says, "do not linger in the wineshop; thou fallest on the ground, thy limbs become weak as those of a child."—F. W. Farrar.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. We have had four Golden Texts this year from the Book of Proverbs: what are they?

The Book of Proverbs. A Manual of Conduct—this is the title some one has fittingly given this Book. It is a treasury of invaluable advice. It urges the virtue of industry, honesty, kindness, forgiveness, etc.; warns against vices; and praises the worth of wisdom. When a New York merchant asked Mr. Whitelaw Reid what was the best book for him to give his clerks as a business hand-book, Mr. Reid recommended the Book of Proverbs.

It is thought that the sayings of the Book of Proverbs were combined into one book after the Exile, but most of them are very old, and many of them are the words of Solomon. In the book itself different portions are ascribed to different authors. The opening words of the book say: "The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel"; the first verse of chapter 25 states: "These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah, copied out"; the first verse of chapter 30: "The words of Agur the Son of Jakeh, the oracle"; and of chapter 31. "The words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." Section 22.17 to 24.22 is called the Little Wisdom Book. Notice that in the Revised Version wide spaces separate it from what precedes and follows. It contains "The Words of the Wise"—whether Solomon or not can not be determined—to a young man whom he calls "my son."

"Have not I written unto thee excellent things
Of counsels and knowledge.
To make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,
That thou mayest carry back words of truth to them that send thee?"

he questions. Among his excellent counsels is a warning against drinking wine which forms the topic of our temperance lesson today.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Once when a prince was eating, a fly came through the open window and alighted on his food. He could have killed it easily, but instead idly watched it, and admired its iridescent wings. The next day it came again, this time as large as a butterfly. "Do not harm it," the prince said to his courtiers, "there is food enough for both of us, and see how beautiful its wings have become!" The third day it had grown as large as a bat, and the prince became alarmed as he saw it take all his drink. He ordered all the windows and doors closed that it might not enter again. The fourth day, it was the size of a hawk; it broke through a window and entered as before, and this time it devoured all the food upon the table. "Put iron bars across the windows," commanded he, thoroughly alarmed, "that I may eat and drink and not die." But the next day the attendants heard the twisting of bars and the shattering of glass and then screams, and rushing in they found the prince dead upon the floor, and upon his throat were the marks of the beak and talons of a vulture.

At first the prince could have killed the fly, but at last the vulture killed him. At first you may overcome an inclination to do wrong, at last the inclination becomes so strong that it overcomes you.

This is the lesson of this fable, and it is the lesson of our text today. From what book of the Bible is our text? These verses tell us about the effect of strong drink at the first and at the last. At the first, when its temptation can easily be put from us, how does verse 31 describe it? What does the next verse say it does at the last? Its power over the drunkard becomes so great that after a night of drinking and a morning of sickening stupor he only says, "I will seek it yet again." The vulture has him in his deadly grasp.

Beware of Intoxication. Can one become intoxicated with anything besides strong drink? Whom does our text couple with the drunkard? The drunkard and the glutton: what is a glutton? One may overeat as well as overdrink. To eat too much food doesn't make one a beast as to drink too much intoxicating liquor does, but its effect is very harmful, nevertheless. How do you feel after a hearty Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner? Would you want to feel that way all the time? Overeating makes one dull and stupid, drowsy as our text says; it prevents one from having a clear brain and doing good work; and it is the cause of many diseases.

Be not among winebibbers,
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:
For the drunkard shall come to poverty;
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

One may have too great craving not only for meat, or flesh, but for cake and candy, for tobacco and drugs. The only drunkard you think about is the man who gets intoxicated on beer or wine, but he can be intoxicated by food or money or dress or many other things.

What sometimes turns the simple liking for such things into a craving for them? Their *Pleasantness.* They are fair and fascinating. The wine is red; it sparkles in the cup, it goes down smoothly, says the writer of Proverbs. Their *Persuasiveness.* They seem to promise to do us good, to make us happy. Their *Practice.* At first we are a little afraid of them, or as in the case of liquor or tobacco, we don't like them. But constant use of them overcomes this, and at last a craving for them is aroused. If they were unpleasant to look at, or if they gave us no pleasure, or if we had nothing to do with them, they would never have a chance of getting a hold upon us.

What is their *Power?* Once a man likes them and the liking becomes a passion for them, their power over him becomes tyrannical. The passion drives him whither it will. It holds him in bondage. It is like being chained hand and foot.

What is their *Punishment?* They make one suffer. Our text tells us what is the punishment of the drunkard.

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions?
Who hath complaining? Who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?

Drink brings a man to misery, poverty, and crime. And all the other passions bring their punishments with them. The passion for dress makes a woman get into debt; the passion for food makes one's mind sluggish and one's body diseased; the passion for money makes one miserly, unscrupulous; the passion for gambling makes one a nervous wreck and often a cheat and a thief.

And what is the *Prevention?* Our text tells as far as drink is concerned. "Look not thou upon the wine." In this morning's paper Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., tells us that not he nor his father nor his grandfather ever tasted spirituous liquor. Perhaps this is one reason why they have had such clear brains and have been able to acquire such great wealth. We cannot say Never look upon food or upon many other things which have their temptations for you. But we can say, Do not allow yourself to acquire a craving for them. Set your heart upon higher hungers and thirsts, ideals and purposes. Heed Paul's counsel to "Put on the whole armor of God."

Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thy heart in the way.

The Gluttonous Python. The natives of India have an ingenious way of catching pythons. When they see a long trail made by the python's body near the bank of a river, and find a heap of ruins near by, they know this is the abode of the huge serpent. Then they make a hole in the ruined wall just large enough for the python to crawl through. And on each side of the hole they tie a pig to a stake. As the python comes home for the night it hears the pigs squealing, and quickly seizes one of them. Down goes the pig into the big snake's throat, sucked in slowly by sheer muscular action. In about half an hour the pig has passed completely down the long neck and in another half hour it is down a couple of yards farther into the python's stomach.

Most animals would go right to sleep after such a gorge, but the greedy python hears the pig on the other side and can't forego that meal also. It puts its head through the hole and swallows the second pig. Then the wily natives have the snake caught! Pig number one prevents it from advancing; and pig number two prevents it from retreating. The natives lasso the python round the neck, break down the wall, pass a coil of rope between the two lumps of pig before they can amalgate, and then they bear away the python to captivity, whence it is sent to some "Zoo." Perhaps you have seen the glutton who has been caught in this way.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Proverbs 23.20, 21.

To parley with temptation is to play with fire.—Bunyan.

The way to stop a habit is not to start it.—Frances Willard.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: DEADLY FOES IN DISGUISE

Suggestions for Beginning the Lesson. "Freckles" had no mother and a drunkard for a father. But he also had a Sunday-school, and there he learned about temperance and the fight against evil. "Freckles" served milk at people's back-doors. When the town had a local option election, "Freckles" put on a white badge, marked in gold letters with the slogan, *The Saloon Must Go,* and did his best to help. Plenty of men wore the badges, too. But when election day came and the town went "wet," the liquor forces being too strong, the men took off their badges and said, "It's no use."

But the next morning "Freckles" still had his badge on. "Why, you haven't taken your badge off yet," said one customer. "Why should I?" was the quick answer. "It was the *men* that voted yesterday; but it won't be long before *we Sunday-school boys* will be doing the voting—and then the saloons are going to go!"

This is the story as it was told a number of years ago. Today "Freckles'" prophecy has come true. The Sunday-school boys of his day are now members of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the forty-four States of the

Union who voted that *The Saloon Must Go,* and today we have a nation free from the curse of saloons.

If the Sunday-schools have done nothing more than this, they have been wonderfully worth while.

The evils of intemperance are widely portrayed in our selection from the Book of Proverbs. What questions does the "wise man" ask? How does he answer his questions? What good counsel does he give? Why?

For and against Alcoholic Liquors. "One genial gentleman offers the fact that Uncle Sam received the trifling sum of two hundred and fifty million dollars yearly from the liquor trade. This certainly helps out on the rent. But just how much of this should be deducted for the 'overhead' created by the gay and frolicsome Demon Rum he omits to say.

"Another says that Prohibition is a menace to American Liberty!

"We know the charm of the dancing bubbles in the glass under the crimson flow of the banquet-lamp. We have felt the gentle coursing of laggard blood, after a hard day, sent on its way by a sturdier wine. We have been drawn back from uncharted waters, grim and threatening, by the magic of strong liquor. We know the cooling, grateful ministry of a good Pilsener after a rousing gallop on a summer's day.

"We also know the piteous story that may follow all, and *does* follow many, who are so beguiled. The deepening inertia will not long respond to homeopathic doses of the poison, and right there is the beginning of a story so horrible in all its reaches that the matchless power of supreme oratory must falter in the telling. The cry of little children, the tears of wives and mothers, the despair of strong men—ah, my brothers, would you wave the flag of American Liberty in the face of these?"

Look not upon Any Deadly Foe. A reckless man in a zoological garden once seized a venomous serpent by the nape of the neck and held it up before his companions. He thought he had the serpent wholly in his power. But it began to coil its long body about his arm, and then slowly to tighten its grasp, until the man in agony was obliged to drop his hold on its neck. The serpent quickly turned and bit him, and his death followed. That man thought he was strong enough to play with the serpent and thrust it from him when he wearied of the play. Many think they are strong enough to play with temptation of any sort, but they find sooner or later that the temptation has mastered them. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

A noted artist said that he never allowed himself to look at a badly painted picture, for if he did his brush was sure to take a hint from it. Whoever is tempted to tarry over a bad book or with evil companions or in the neighborhood of any evil should make this artist's rule his own, for if he yields, his character is sure to be marred by it.

Eve would not have eaten the forbidden fruit had she not lingered by the tree and listened to the voice of the tempter.

A Deadly Foe for Boys. It is said that Hans Wagner, Pittsburgh's popular favorite in professional baseball, was offered a thousand dollars to consent to have his picture used on the boxes of a brand of cigarettes. Wagner positively refused. The representative of the tobacco company expressed surprise. "I thought all you ball-players were money-crazy," he insinuated. But Wagner answered indignantly, "I'm not crazy for any money that means encouraging any boy to smoke cigarettes. If my name and picture on a card or box will have that effect, I tell you I'm not going to sign up, no matter how high you go with your offers."—The Christian Herald.

Be Not Gluttonous. The condor of the Andes Mountains is the largest bird that flies. It can fly more swiftly than the eagle, and is so powerful and strong that men who have tried to capture it without weapons have with difficulty escaped with their lives. There is only one time when the condor can be approached safely by a cautious hunter, and that is after it has had a heavy meal, for it is a very greedy bird and eats so much that it is then incapable of flight. The bird is like some people who eat till they are stupid.

The Sense of a Monkey. George looked up from the book he was reading and laughed aloud. "Well, if that doesn't show just about as much sense as you'd expect of a monkey!" he said. "Just listen to this, Uncle Joe: "'In certain countries wild monkeys are trapped by a very ingenious method. The native trapper makes a small opening in one end of a cocoanut just large enough

for a monkey to thrust his hand through. He then takes out the edible part of the nut, partly fills the shell with rice and places it in the grove where the monkey plays.'

"And then it goes on to tell how the monkey puts his hand into the cocoanut and grabs a handful of rice," said George. "And of course that makes a fist of his hand so he can't get it out of the little hole. He pulls and pulls, to get it out, but he never has the sense to let go of the rice. And so he gets caught, for he can't climb a tree or run with that cocoanut over his hand. Just because he won't let go a little rice! It shows how little sense monkeys have, doesn't it?"

Uncle Joe nodded. "It does," he agreed thoughtfully. "Still, you don't expect much sense of a monkey. With human beings of course it might be different. And yet—what about the man who keeps on drinking when he knows that the habit is a frightful handicap to his health and efficiency? What about the boy who keeps on smoking cigarettes when he has been warned that they will undermine his health? Is the rice worth it? Or the girl who suffers tortures with broken arches rather than give up her high heels? Or the person, male or female, young or old, who overeats? Maybe, George, if we don't want to be monkeys in any of these cases we'd all better look and see what brand of rice we're hanging on to! What do you think?"

George grinned and nodded. Then suddenly he reddened and his eyes grew bright with a new idea. "And my rice," he cried, "is laziness! I'd rather loaf round and read than 'bone' and get my lessons. Or maybe it's the cocoanut. Anyhow, it's what's keeping me from the top of the tree. And right here's where I'm going to drop it."—Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. One of our highest privileges of manhood is the privilege of not touching what may harm us.—H. Clay Trumbull.

No man has any business to be in bad business.—Wm. A. Sunday.

A "well preserved man" is never preserved in alcohol.—Youth's Companion.

Whether or not the world would be vastly benefited by total and final abolition of all intoxicating drinks seems to me not an open question. Three-fourths of mankind confess the affirmative with their tongues, and I believe all the rest acknowledge it in their hearts.—Lincoln.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: TRUE CHARGES AGAINST ALCOHOL

Suggestion for Beginnning the Lesson. It is interesting to compare Richard Le Gallienne's attack on the wine-cup with that in the Book of Proverbs which we study today. Here are a few verses from the modern poem, written in the style of Omar Khayyam:

This shall the Vine do for you—it shall steal
Subtly the kind capacity to feel.
As it to brittle stone your arteries,
So sense by sense in turn it shall congeal.

This shall the Vine do for you—this good brain,
By usury of chance favors it shall drain
Of all its powers to think or dream,
And hold it captive by a vinous chain.

By small robberies of power and peace
The usurer Vine doth make him much increase
Of mortal souls, ripens and purples him
And takes on bloom: such robberies as these:

Straight limbs he makes to falter and fills with aches,
Proud backs he bends and the strong framework shakes
Even of doughty captains of the wars;
No strength beneath the moon but what he breaks.

Both here and in our lesson text from Proverbs we see the drunkard arraigned as in these words of Dr. George Dana Boardman:

"See how intemperance profanes man's body-nature, opening the way for diseases, rags, gutter, brutishness. See how intemperance profanes man's society-nature, involving loss of reputation, esteem, confidence, good-will. See

how intemperance profanes man's mind-nature, involving loss of talent, memory, reason, judgment, coherence, skill, caution, shrewdness, resoluteness. See how intemperance profanes man's heart-nature, involving loss of delicacy, conscience, truthfulness, aspiration, manliness, religion."

John Barleycorn Announces His Exit. I am the scion of a great family; my ancestry antedates the time of Noah. Good times and bad times do not affect my operation; the last jitney may go to pay me homage, even though the babes cry for bread. Many have been called great, but I am the greatest; my dominion embraces the whole universe. Every nation is made to taste my glory. I cater to the old and the young, the male and the female, I pay them both equal court; the rich and the poor alike tango to my cymbals, the great and the small likewise give ear to my music.

I am a fun-loving, rollicking, smashing-hearted demon, the tarantula of all vices to which man is heir. My methods are most ingenious. I cajole my victim into believing I can steady his nerves, put him to sleep, wake him up, renew youth, stave off old age, increase his joy, dispel his sorrow. I can send the blood coursing through his veins like an electric flash. I burn up, use up and destroy the cells that go to make up the wonderful organization of man. I dethrone reason and convert the gentlest nature into one of ferocity. The most sanguine and optimistic mind I turn into suspicion and jealousy; no brain is able to cope with my onslaught.

I am king of the home-breakers. I point with pride to the thousands and thousands of children I have made homeless, to the vast numbers of mothers I have reduced to rags and tears.

The common boast among men is, "I can stop if I will," but what will can withstand my seductiveness? His will against my power is like a bubble upon the ocean; it rises to the surface, bobs around a few times, and is gone.

Without me, jails, penitentiaries, police courts, detention homes, probation officers, nay, even the electric chair and the hangman's noose would pass into oblivion.

If all the homes I have wrecked, the widows and orphans I have made, the hearts I have broken, the graves I have filled, could be listed and placed in line, they would belt the globe many, many times.

But my long reign is now on the wane. Soon, very soon, the horizon will close down upon me.

In my horoscope I see them come in great numbers, men and women, from every land, of every hue and color, head erect, chest thrown out, and with a look of determination in every feature. Such a vast concourse I have never witnessed; some in carriages, some in wagons, others in machines, on horseback, afoot—the whole earth seems to be rocking to and fro in the great commotion. Bold and brave I have been, now I shake with fear and trembling. Pandemonium surely has set in. To add to the confusion, they unfurl great banners bearing startling inscriptions: "Down with Liquor," "Safeguard Our Homes," "Our Children First in Mind," "Save Posterity," "We Love Our Boys." Bringing up the rear is a large white banner, and engraved in gold letters are these words, "The Battle Is Over, the Victory Won."

So, amid the flourish of trumpets, the clash of cymbals and the rolling of drums I make ready for my final exit,—"unwept, unhonored and unsung."—Dr. Emma Baldwin, in Christian Herald, 1918.

To Whom is Credit Due for a Saloonless America? "God is on our side, and we are bound to win," declared Frances Willard. How much we owe Miss Willard and Francis Murphy and John B. Gough and others who fought the liquor traffic in our land when the prohibition movement was most unpopular! Among the great organizations which had a leading part in fighting the evils of intemperance we at once think of the W. C. T. U., the Salvation Army, the Anti-Saloon League, and the No-License League.

Then came the Employers' Liability Law which threw the responsibility and expense for all accidents on the employer. The relation between drink and industrial accidents was worked out to the last decimal, and it made the employers the country over anxious for prohibition. Next came the War, bringing with it special reasons for stringent temperance legislation. To win the war the army must be sober. Dry zones were established around all the camps. Every saloon within a radius of five miles from the center of a camp was closed; and, needless to say, so was also every *maison tolerée*. It was made

a penal offence to supply any man in the U. S. uniform, whether officer or private, with any kind of alcoholic beverage. Grain could not be wasted, and the making of spirits for drinking was entirely stopped.

What was good for the soldier was good for the citizen, what was best for the workingman was best for everyone, and college professors, heads of great banking and insurance companies, doctors and scientists, and other leading men of our nation, signed the Memorial for National Prohibition, which asked that the manufacture, sale, export, import and transport of all intoxicating liquor be prohibited throughout our land. Finally the prohibition amendment to the Federal Constitution was ratified by the last one of the necessary States (thirty-six) in January, 1919, and went into effect in January, 1920 (with forty-four States agreeing). Meanwhile an emergency war measure came into force, and on July first, 1919, we became a saloonless nation.

The North American considers prohibition the most important measure of social and economic legislation adopted since the Republic was formed. It sums it up thus: "It means a conservation of national wealth which within ten years will equal the colossal costs of the War. By ending a wasted expenditure of two billions a year, it will divert that sum to satisfying demands for necessaries and comforts of life, creating incomparably the greatest new market any legislation could open to American industry. It will multiply the man-power of the nation and enhance the skill of the workers. It will conserve vast stores of food-stuffs and other raw materials, ease the strain upon importation, end a tremendous waste of fuel, and release scores of thousands of workers for productive employment. It will relieve industry and labor of a heavy load due to inefficiency, costly accidents, and lost working time."

Has This Prophecy Come True? National Prohibition will reduce poverty by at least twenty-five per cent.; prostitution, in greater proportion; crime, in still greater. It will wipe out the most corrupting influence in city politics, and the most poisonous in business relations. It will break down some of the most serious hindrances to a common national loyalty. It will lift one of the heaviest handicaps to progress from our immigrant groups. The labor problem will be cleared of one of its most baffling complications, and responsible working-class movements will develop unprecedented intelligence and power. It will release vast productive energies in a people capable of securing a more equitable distribution of the increased national output. No such charter of freedom and fulfilment to women and children has ever been written. Taken with all that it implies and promises, we should recognize it as one of the very greatest and most inspiring events in history, and one that may well mark the beginning of a new order of accelerated spiritual evolution.—Robert A. Woods, in The Congregationalist.

The Inconsistency of America. Early in 1919 an English paper published these facts: "In Africa, prior to the war, importations of liquor were increasing, and bottled gin was actually used as currency. Some effort was made to control the traffic by duties varying from 3s. 6d. to 18s. per gallon and by partial prohibition. The former plan did not prevent the growth of the trade; the latter has created an invidious racial distinction, for the low-class white can get freely what is denied the educated native. Before the war most of the spirits sold in Africa came from Holland and Germany; but since the war America has done a big business. In the year 1916 America shipped to British West Africa over 1,000,000 gallons of spirits. A fact like this shows how difficult it is for any nation to be absolutely self-consistent or faultless. Surely in territories where white men are solely responsible for the government this curse of civilization could be entirely prohibited, and in countries that are self-governed it is our duty to refrain from persuading or coercing native governments to permit the sale of a drug that is so deadly a foe to all the higher life of man."

The natives themselves are calling for protection from this traffic. In a recent issue of a West Africa paper the following appeared: "It ought to be the duty of a Christian Government bent upon the good of the people and not upon the making of revenue by means good, bad, or indifferent, to strain every nerve to save the people from the demoralizing influences of a gin traffic."

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Something must come in the place of the saloon: what is it? See The Congregationalist, 1919.

2. The drink question in England.

3. Christendom's rum trade with Africa.

REVIEW: SAUL, DAVID, AND SOLOMON COMPARED

Golden Text

Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. 1 Samuel 16.7

SELECTION FOR READING Psalm 72

A REVIEW FOR JUNIORS AND INTERMEDIATES: A STUDY OF THREE KINGS

Saul. Saul was the first king of the Israelites. He was chosen because the people demanded a king that they might be like the rest of the people round about them, and might have some one to lead them in their battles; and because Samuel the prophet anointed him as the one chosen by God. He was a warrior king. He fought the Philistines all his life, and he died on the field of battle.

What sort of man was Saul? Several qualities stand out prominently. He was *jealous:* he could not bear to have any one praised more than himself. He was *self-willed,* a man who would take no advice, follow no will but his own. He was *hot-tempered:* when Jonathan and David offended him he was ready to hurl a spear at their heads. He was *fickle:* at one time he honored David and said he loved him, and a few weeks later he was seeking to slay him. He was *half-hearted in God's service:* he cared more for his position that he did for the favor of God. These qualities led to actions which lost him the respect of the prophet and of his people. In spite of his success as a leader in battle the people lost faith in him, and his kingdom became unsettled, disunited and weak, so that the Philistines were able to inflict a crushing defeat upon them.

David. David became king through the call of God, but he had to wait long for his throne and won it only after great hardships.

David was a *strong* ruler: he put down the Philistines, crushed rebellion, compelled the people to obey. He was a *deeply religious man,* rendering open and enthusiastic honor to God. He sinned, but unlike Saul, he was *penitent.* He was *generous* to friends and to enemies, lavishing kindness upon both. He was *tactful* in managing other men, knowing how to bear and be patient for the sake of the best interests of the nation. He ruled with a strength that was softened by kindness and mercy, and a piety that was sincere. And therefore the people respected and loved him, and his nation reached a unity and strength it had never before possessed.

Solomon. Solomon came to the throne in the easiest of ways—by birth and the will of his father. With his rule we pass into a new atmosphere in the history of the Israelites. It was largely marked by *peace.* It was marked also by *luxury:* Solomon's house was a beautiful palace, he wore gorgeous raiment, and lived always in great state. The dreams of *national prosperity* were realized and the great temple called Solomon's Temple was erected and opened for worship. Solomon was noted for his *wisdom:* he was skillful in judgment and some of his decisions became famous throughout the world. But the end of his rule was marked by a great *decline.* Abundance, pleasures and riches softened the people, weakened their devotion to God and led to the building of shrines for idols throughout the land. Solomon's rule made the nation prosperous, rich, famous, but it created evils that if uncorrected were bound to destroy all the prosperity won.

Which of these kings do you like the best? Most of you will answer "David." He was so heroic and big-hearted, and his crown never spoiled him. But which of these kings shall we follow? They all were great men and did great things, but they all had great faults and committed great sins. We cannot make any one of them our hero. There is only one King whom we can reverence with all our hearts and implicitly follow. Jesus himself said, "One greater than Solomon is here." And we agree. He is greater—the greatest King of all. Him only we will follow. Him only we will serve.

FOR SENIORS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE FAULTS AND EXCELLENCIES OF SAUL, DAVID, AND SOLOMON

Saul. "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished! (*2 Sam. 1.27*). So ends the strain of lamentation poured forth by a generous rival over the bier of the first king of Israel.

"Saul is commonly regarded as a disobedient, self-willed tyrant, one who forsook God and was forsaken by God in return. He is contrasted with David, and while the latter is spoken of as the 'man after God's own heart,' the type of a faithful ruler and good shepherd of the people, Saul is regarded as the special object of divine displeasure. It is true that in Saul's character there was much evil, as in his life there were dark and calamitous epochs. But nevertheless brighter and purer traits at times gleamed forth, and in spite of all that is sad and sinful some tender associations twine around his memory.

"Though chosen by God, he was chosen in conformity with popular ideas, and as a representative of the ruder and more primitive patterns of the natural life. His qualities were those which attract the popular eye and enlist the popular admiration. Tallness of stature and superiority in bodily strength were, in early ages, qualities that raised men to the command of their fellows, and these especially commended Saul to the people of Israel.

"He at first was reluctant to take upon himself so great a responsibility, diffident of occupying so exalted a position. After his election and anointing he withdrew into his former obscurity, and men began to murmur and fancy it was but a mock king they had elected after all. But a sudden occurrence aroused his sluggish nature and awoke his dormant energies. The men of Jabesh-Gilead, sore pressed by the king of Ammon, sent forth an urgent appeal for help. It reached Saul, and so promptly did he respond to it, and so swift and complete was the deliverance he achieved for them, that there were no more murmurers and malcontents in Israel, and no more doubts about the merits of the newly chosen king. Then followed a period in which he carried on a succession of wars, the issue of which secured the independence of his country.

"But on more than one occasion he had shown an arbitrary temper, a tendency to impatience and self-will. And when at length he was guilty of a flagrant breach of the divine commandment in reference to the treatment of the Amalekites, it was finally announced to him by God's prophet that because he had rejected the word of the Lord the Lord had also rejected him from being king.

"From that day forward a shadow fell over Saul, and the rest of his life was passed in darkness and eclipse. A continual restlessness now possessed him. Strange fears and jealousies haunted him. He was by fits passionate, vindictive, remorseful, tender. His morbid spirit, ever brooding and preying on itself, yielded to the fatal disease, and the great warrior-king was at frequent intervals a moody madman in his royal halls. 'The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.' Partially, from time to time, the minstrels' harp could give rest and comfort to that troubled soul. But the gloom grew ever deeper, the sense of loneliness and abandonment ever more terribly oppressive, till at length despair of the help and support of God drove him, when trouble again threatened his country, to invoke the power of sorcery.

"At last the fatal morrow dawned on the heights of Gilboa, and the fierce fight was fought on those sunny slopes. And so, as the historian with impressive brevity describes it, 'Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.'

"Surely there can be nothing more tragic than the picture of that poor, debased king vainly, in the hour of his need, appealing to mute altar and unprofitable sacrifices, and at last in his despair, taking counsel of sorcery and witchcraft.

"Many a life opens like Saul's full of rich and bright promise, and like his terminates in disaster, failure and ignominy."

David. David, the second king, was the greatest king Israel ever had. Five qualities marked him, as a young man. First of all, when he was nothing but a shepherd boy, he showed *fidelity* in the ordinary duties of every-day life. Here is the summing up of his method—"And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways and the Lord was with him." Then he showed *courage and high resolve* in the face of danger. In his contest with Goliath we see his religious *faith* contributing to his courage. It was moral strength pitted against brute force. Third, he showed a fine *capacity for friendship* with men. "His soul was

knit with the soul of Jonathan and he loved him as he loved his own soul." Fourth, he was *great-hearted and generous* to his enemies. There were months when he was hunted through the hills of Judea by the hirelings of Saul, as if he had been a mad dog, but when he had Saul within his power he refused to strike. Finally, he was a man of *genuine piety*. We read in one place that he was "a man after God's own heart," and this was so, not because he never did wrong, but because when he fell down he got up again. He got up again faced toward God and not away from him, faced away from the evil which had thrown him down and not toward a farther advance in wrong-doing.

David was a man of faith and of prayer; he was a man of deep, sweet feeling and of spiritual longing. In all his better moments when he was truly himself his heart hungered after righteousness and his soul was athirst for the living God. He came to the throne at the age of thirty, and he reigned over Israel for forty years. His name was handed down as one of the greatest kings that Israel ever had. He never could have won this position but for the fact that he had in his heart faith and hope and love towards God and towards his fellow men. He was a man of deep and genuine piety.—Adapted from Five Young Men.

Few men have achieved greater results than did David. He was a born ruler of men. His magnetic personality attracted all who came within his influence. He completely reorganized the army and became renowned as a military leader. Saul had accomplished nothing permanent for Israel, and in the face of immense difficulties David unified the people and made of them not only a nation but a great nation. To David they owed their capital, their court, their center of religious worship.

In First Chronicles we see David occupied with amassing materials and treasures for the temple, planning every detail of the building, arranging the ritual, and organizing the temple services.

Warrior, statesman, priest, architect, musician, poet—a many-sided man was David. No wonder he became the idol of his people.

Solomon. "When we pass from David to Solomon, from Second Samuel to First Kings, we are conscious of a change in both the quality of the drama and the character of its hero," to quote Dr. George Adam Smith's words in his Second Volume on Jerusalem. "Instead of the palpable figure, the vivid features of a man, there arises an apparition more majestic, indeed, but, just by reason of its grandeur, nebulous and vague. Solomon in all his glory—we see the glory, but are dazzled as to the man behind it. In part, at least, this haze may be attributed to the style of the narrators. Of the history of David, the bulk is the precious bequest of a contemporary, who has not lost sight of the man in the monarch. But of Solomon's history much more is due to writers at a distance from their subject, and even where the text is taken from contemporary annals it seems to be the work of courtiers to whom the King, the Royal Personage, is everything. Even so, however, the questions arise, whether some of the haze may be due to the want in Solomon himself of the character and passion that give distinctness to all the movements of David; or whether the features of the great Sultan are hidden from us only by the largeness and splendor of his policy, and through lack of that atmosphere of adversity which alone reveals a man to his contemporaries and posterity.

"Solomon's appearances are all official—on the judgment-seat, on the throne, consecrating the temple. Even such as are religious are after a more sober style of religion. They have lost the primitive ecstasy which distinguished the worship of both of his predecessors. He sleeps, it is true, in a sanctuary in order to induce a dream; but we cannot conceive of Solomon either tearing his clothes and lying prostrate like Saul, or dancing before the ark as David his father did. Even the wisdom which exalts his personality sublimates it at the same time. Even the one personal temper imputed to him,—now King Solomon loved women.....he took foreign wives,—may have been only the result of policy and a love of splendor. His establishment of many strange shrines in Jerusalem was certainly due to such motives, as well as to the exigencies of the foreign trade upon which he adventured. In short, behind his wealth, his wisdom, his wives, and his idols, it is difficult to discern the real man. Yet through that long and prosperous reign the throne must have been filled by a personality of power."

"Solomon was the greatest, wisest, and in some respects the meanest of the Hebrew Kings," declares Dr. Henry van Dyke. "His life is one of the standing riddles of history. Never man began so fairly and ended so darkly. The blos-

soms of his youth were like the flowers on the tree of life: the fruits of his old age were like Dead Sea apples, full of dust. In him genius was wedded to sin, and success was the mother of failure. Bright as was the promise of his early years, glorious as were the achievements of his manhood, the clouds that gathered round his death were so heavy and dark that men have remained in doubt whether his final place is among the saved or among the lost."

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Juniors. 1. Whom did Samuel anoint to be kings over Israel? 2. What relation was David to Ruth? 3. How did David treat Saul? 4. What great friend had David, and what did he do? 5. Who was Mephibosheth and why is he remembered? 6. What did David do with the ark, and why? 7. Why did people like David? 8. For what is Absalom remembered? 9. For what quality is Solomon famous? 10. For what great work is Solomon famous?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. David's early life forms a large part of one book of the Bible, his reign fills another book, and his last days overlap a third book: what are these books? 2. What are the best things we have heard about Saul? 3. David? 4. Solomon? 5. Jonathan? 6. How did Jonathan show his devotion to his father? 7. Tell the story of Absalom. 8. In what respects was David great? 9. In what respects was Solomon great?

For Young People and Adults. 1. What did Samuel tell Saul was of more importance than religious forms? 2. What are the chief events of David's life? 3. Of Solomon's life? 4. Describe Saul's character. 5. David's. 6. Solomon's. 7. Tell what Saul accomplished for Israel. 8. What David accomplished. 9. What Solomon accomplished.

WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

For Juniors.

1. The Story of David and Goliath.
2. Nathan's Parable.
3. The Visit of the Queen of Sheba.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. The Strength and the Weakness of Saul.
2. David in Exile.
3. A Great Friendship.
4. David and Absalom.
5. The Books of Samuel.

For Young People and Adults.

1. The Books of Samuel.
2. An Appreciation of Jonathan.
3. Unfilial Sons of the Bible.
4. Saul, David and Solomon.

QUESTIONS FOR PUPILS TO LOOK UP OR THINK ABOUT FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Juniors. 1. How many Gospels have we? 2. Which Gospel do we study for the next six months? 3. Where is Bethlehem? 4. How far from Jerusalem? 5. What did Herod bid the Wise-men do? 6. What reason did he give for wanting to know all about the Child Jesus? 7. What was his real reason for wanting information? 8. Why did not the Wise-men obey him? 9. What did Herod try to do? 10. How was the Child Jesus saved?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What does the word *Gospel* mean? 2. By how many writers do we have an account of the work and words of Jesus? 3. Where did the Wise-men come from? 4. What can you learn about this Herod? 5. What prophet is quoted in verse 6? 6. Why was Herod troubled? 7. Why were frankincense and myrrh valued? 8. What did Herod do when the Wise-men failed to appear as he had ordered? (Mt. 2.16-23.) 9. Why did Joseph and his family seek refuge in Egypt rather than elsewhere? 10. When did Herod die? 11. What other account of the birth of Jesus is given by Luke?

For Young People and Adults. 1. From what two Anglo-Saxon words is the word *gospel* derived? 2. What does it mean? 3. How were our Four Gospels chosen from all the lives of Jesus that were written? 4. Is Matthew's account of the visit of the Wise-men in any other Gospel? 5. What does Mark tell us about the birth of Jesus? 6. Luke? 7. John? 8. Who were the Magi, or Wise-men? 9. How could they have heard in the East about the expected King of the Jews? 10. Why was Herod troubled at their question?

Fourth Quarter

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

LESSON I—OCTOBER 3

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Golden Text

Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1.21

LESSON Matthew 1 and 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 9:1-7

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Isaiah 7.14-16; Micah 5.2; Luke 1 and 2

MATTHEW 2.1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 2 Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written through the prophet.

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

7 Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. 9 And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned *of God* in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; 15 and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

Wise Men Finding
Worship and favors for THE INFANT KING
Wandering in light with

I. THE WISE MEN'S QUEST FOR THE INFANT KING, verses 1 and 2. It was *in the days of Herod the King* that *Jesus was born in Bethlehem of*

Judea. This was the Herod known to history as Herod the Great, the founder of the Herodian family, whose reign lasted thirty-seven years. At this time *Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem.* They belonged to the priestly or learned class famous among the Medes, Persians and Babylonians as astronomers, astrologers, physicians, soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. The tradition that there were three Wise-men, Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar, may have had its origin in the fact that their gifts were of three kinds, verse 11. These men came *saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.* See Jer. 23.5; Zech. 9.9; Mt. 27.11. "Whatsoever Wise-men they were before, now they begin to be wise-men indeed when they set themselves to inquire after Christ" (Matthew Henry). They were the first non-Jewish seekers of Jesus. According to Kepler's theory and calculation, the star was a conjunction of planets that shone like one star; the Gospel narrative implies a supernatural phenomenon.

II. THE WISE-MEN AND THE TROUBLED HEROD, verses 3-8. *When Herod the King heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* Herod was troubled because he feared a pretender to his throne, and the people of Jerusalem were probably troubled because they feared to have Herod angered, for he was cruel and unscrupulous. Herod *gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people,* the members of the Sanhedrin who would be familiar with the prophecies, and *inquired of them where the Christ should be born.* The Greek ὁ χριστὸς, means the Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ. *And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea* (see Jn. 7.12); *for thus it is written through the prophet,* Micah 5.2.

"The quotation is here given with some change of phraseology which may be readily explained. Matthew takes the common New Testament form, Bethlehem Judah, not the purely Greek form Judæa, and prefixes *land,* as when we say 'Richmond, State of Virginia.' Micah says 'Thou are little to be among the thousands of Judah, yet, out of thee'; meaning that it is a small and insignificant place, scarcely worthy to be marked among the towns of Judah, yet out of it would come, etc.; while Matthew turns toward the moral importance of Bethlehem, as derived from this very fact, and so he puts it, *art in no wise least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee. Thousands* was an antique designation of the great families into which the tribes were subdivided, and was applied by Micah to a town as a residence of such a family; while Matthew uses the more familiar term *princes,* meaning those who by birth stand at the head of great families, and might therefore represents them or their abode"—(Broadus).

Then Herod privily (privately) *called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared.* Herod wished to know the age of the Child who, he thought, might be a claimant to his throne, for he was crafty as well as suspicious. If the Wise-men fail him, the Babe shall not escape his vigilant search, he thinks. *And he* sent them to Bethlehem, and said, *Go and search out exactly concerning the young Child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.*

"Hateful to me as are the gates of hell,
Is he who, hiding one thing in his heart,
Utters another" (Homer).

III. THE WISE-MEN WORSHIP THE INFANT JESUS, AND RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY, verses 9-12. The Wise-men *went their way, and lo, the star which they saw in the east, went before them.* "A poetical way of saying that the star guided them to Jesus." This and verse 10 indicate that the star had not been visible all the time, and its reappearance was unexpected to them. The star led them to the house where was *the young child with Mary his mother. And they fell down and worshipped him,* paying homage to him according to the eastern custom of prostrating themselves before him. *And opening their treasures, they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh,* the gifts most highly valued in their land. The frankincense and myrrh were costly gums obtained from trees; they were used for medicinal purposes and for embalming. *And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod they departed into their own country another way.* "As the Magi were interpreters of dreams, this method of divine revelation was especially appropriate. It is part of God's loving revelation to mankind to make his revela-

tions to different ages, races, and individuals by these channels through which they are accustomed to expect them" (Dummelow).

Bethlehem is south of Jerusalem; they may have gone northeastward to Jericho and the Jordan, or southward to Hebron and Idumea.

IV. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, verses 13-15. By means of a dream, Joseph was warned to *take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.* Egypt was beyond the jurisdiction of Herod, and was then the home of at least a million Jews. Joseph obeyed, and the family remained in Egypt *until the death of Herod,* a few months only, for Herod died in 4 B. C. *That it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet Hosea (11.1), *saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son. "My son* in the original passage is the nation, not the Messiah. St. Matthew, however, saw in the history of Israel a typical foreshadowing of the life of our Lord, and so, in accordance with rabbinical methods of interpretation, applied it to Jesus."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His star, verse 2. It was in keeping with Jewish belief to find indications of great events in the appearance of the heavens, for their ancient Scriptures (Num. 24.17) spoke of a star that should come out of Jacob, and they had long referred the prophecy to their expected Messiah. It was, indeed, universally believed that extraordinary events, especially the birth and death of great men, were heralded by appearances of stars, and still more of comets, or by the conjunction of the heavenly bodies. Belief in the influence of the stars over life and death, and in special portents at the birth of great men, survived to recent times. Shakespeare tells us—

> "When beggars die there are no comets seen;
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."
> —Cunningham Geikie, in The Life of Christ.

And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born, verse 4. The prevailing idea of the rabbis and the people alike was that the Messiah would be simply a great prince, who should found a kingdom of matchless splendor. Almost all fancied that he would be only a human hero, who would lead them to victory. It was agreed among the rabbis that his birthplace must be Bethlehem, and that he must rise from the tribe of Judah. It was believed that he would not know that he was the Messiah till Elias came, accompanied by the prophets, and anointed him. Till then he would be hidden from the people, living unknown among them. The better rabbis taught that the sins of the nation had kept him from appearing, and that "if the Jews repented for one day, he would come."—Cunningham Geikie, in The Life and Words of Christ.

They offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh, verse 11. It is customary in the East to approach kings and princes with a gift in the hand. Even formal visits among friends are preceded by the presentation of gifts; the refusal to accept them is received as a mark of enmity. When Jacob returned from Padan-Aram and sent his presents to Esau, who had come to meet him, he was anxious about their acceptance. The Queen of Sheba brought Solomon spices, gold and precious stones. The Wise-men brought the gifts most highly valued in their land.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What King of Israel had come from Bethlehem? How long did David live before the time of Christ? What message came to Solomon in a dream? What gifts did the Queen of Sheba bring to Solomon?

The Current Expectations. The expectation based on the predictions of their prophets, of the advent of a great king who should be their national Deliverer, had for centuries filled the minds and hearts of the Jews. In the days of Herod, "many were persuaded that it was contained in the ancient books of their priests," according to Tacitus, "that at that very time the East should prevail, and that some should proceed from Judea and possess the dominion." Jews of the Dispersion made known this expectation wherever they met, and it may

have been from them that it reached the Wise-men. And it may have been that the predictions ascribed to their own prophet Zoroaster which pointed to three deliverers, led these Wise-men to see the greatest of the three in the King of the Jews.

Whatever prophecy made them expect a great king, however mistaken their idea of his kingship, and however false may have been their astrological notions which led them to watch the stars for one that announced his birth, these all aroused the Wise-men to make their long pilgrimage to Bethlehem and lay their tributes at the feet of the Infant Jesus, the spiritual king of the world. God used their imperfect knowledge to make known the perfect truth.

The Date of the Birth of Jesus. The exact date of Jesus' birth is not known. In the days of Herod the King, Matthew says, and though Herod reigned thirty-seven years this was definite enough for him, for orientals think of time by periods, not by exact number of days as we do. In those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled; this was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria, says Luke. There was a system of periodic enrollment in the province of Syria according to a fourteen year's cycle, and the first enrollment was made in the year 8-7 B. C., but it was sometimes delayed, we are told.

Our present system of chronology, by which we reckon the years before or after the birth of Christ (B. C., before Christ; A. D. Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord) was established in the sixth century A. D. Before that, time was reckoned in the year of the world (A. M., *Anno Mundi*) or from the founding of Rome (U. C., *Urbe Condita*). The task of computing the birth of Christ so as to make a new reckoning was given in the sixth century to a learned monk named Dionysius Exiguus. He made an error in his computation and placed the date several years too late. Herod died in April 750 (B. C. 4). Some months must have intervened between the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem by Herod and the latter's death, Joseph having meanwhile taken Mary and the young child into Egypt (Matt. 2.16, 19). The date usually accepted for his birth is B. C. 5, four years and one week (if we accept Dec. 25th as the day) before the year which is called A. D. 1. In Jan. A. D. 2, Jesus was five years old; in Jan. A. D. 3, Jesus was six years old: thus we must always add three years to the date of any event to determine his age at that time.

Christmas was not observed even according to tradition until the second century after Christ, and it was celebrated in different parts of Europe and Asia in various months, until in the fourth century both the Eastern and Western Churches agreed upon December 25th as the right day.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The interview of Herod and the Wise-men took place in Jerusalem. Bethlehem, where the Wise-men found the Infant "King of the Jews" is six miles

Bethlehem of Today, Showing the Market-Place

southwest of Jerusalem on the road to Hebron. The Hebrew name, Bethlehem, means the "House of Bread," and referred doubtless to the fertility of the surrounding region.

In a natural cave beneath the Church of the Nativity (the oldest part of which may have been erected by Constantine in the fourth century A. D.) there is a so-called Chapel of the Manger, where, it is claimed, the Infant Jesus was laid. The "house" visited by the Wise-men was not the place of the manger, as so often erroneously stated, but the temporary abiding place of the family, for their visit was made some little time after Jesus' birth.

"What a gold mine Shakespeare has been to Stratford-on-Avon! How lucrative the sentiment that clings to Abbottsford; and what a commercial asset Sir Walter Scott has been to all Scotland, despite the fact that he died a bankrupt! The monetary value of Burns to Ayr is great. How many pilgrims would have made the pilgrimage to Haworth if the Bronté's had not created the shrine? Most illustrious men confer immortality on their obscure birthplace and enrich nations and ages. But what shall we say of him who was born in the city of David, which is called Bethlehem? After nearly two thousand years all eyes are turned to it today with eager interest, and who can appraise its moral and spiritual importance to the race?"

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE CHILD JESUS ESCAPES FROM A WICKED KING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. I suppose that most of you boys and girls look at a calendar occasionally. Can any of you tell me what number on our next year's calendar will be different from the one on this? Yes, it will have 1921 on it instead of 1920. Now why should it be 1921 instead of some number like 3989? Every boy and girl knows that. It is because Jesus Christ was born 1921 years ago.

Now suppose you went across to India and asked a Mohammedan boy what year it is now. You would perhaps be surprised to hear him say 1297; and if you asked a Hindu girl, she would tell you 1021. But if you went to Palestine you would find that the Jews have a calendar and they have the number 5681. It is a very interesting story to find out why these people have these different numbers. Just now I can only say that in each people's history an event occurred that was so important that they began to count the years from that time onward.

And that is how we got our calendar. At first the Christians used the calendar which they found in use in the country where they lived, but after awhile some began to say, "It is so many years since Christ was born." Then the custom spread. But some people were mistaken in the year and were using the wrong number. So at last a monk called Dionysius Exiguus was asked to calculate back and find out just how many years had passed since Christ was born. And what do you think he did? Just what you do sometimes in working your arithmetic. He made a mistake. He did his best, but he made a mistake of four years in his reckoning. And so all our calendars happen to be four years wrong, and instead of reading 1920 they should read 1924.

But it would be too much trouble now to change all the calendars, so we keep on with the old numbers. The important thing to remember is that we have this reckoning because it reminds us of a very important event, namely, the coming of Jesus Christ to save the world to God.—The Rev. Fred Smith, in The Christian Work.

The Child Jesus Escapes from a Wicked King. It is a beautiful account which Matthew gives us of the coming of the Wise-men to visit the Infant King. Where was their home? What led them to come to Jerusalem? What did they ask? Who heard of their quest and was troubled? Herod feared that the Child who was "born King of the Jews" might grow up and claim the throne. He took steps to find out all he could about the Babe. What did he learn? When he told the Wise-men what did he command them to do? Herod claimed that he wanted to know just where the child was that he might worship also, but God warned Joseph in a dream about Herod's true intentions: what were they? What did the Wise-men do when they found Jesus? Why did they not return to Jerusalem and tell Herod about him?

Jesus had many escapes from danger. Once men sought to stone him to

death; on another occasion they tried to fling him over a precipice. Once they sent men to make him a prisoner. But each time he escaped. Here we have today the story of his first escape from death.

Herod sent his soldiers to Bethlehem, but they came too late. The little King was beyond their reach. He had been wrapped up in warm clothes by Mary his mother and carried out into the dark night where Joseph waited with the asses, and then they had set off for that far land of Egypt which had been the home of their race so many centuries before. The Babe had many friends. First there were the Wise-men who took care not to betray his whereabouts to the King Herod. Then there were Mary and Joseph, so ready and prompt to obey the heavenly warning. And there was a hiding-place ready to rescue and protect him. Then there was God, for ever on the watch to protect his own. And it was by the help of all these that Jesus was saved from the hands of his enemy and spared to do his great work for the world.

The Peril of Child Life Today. There are bad homes ready to taint and corrupt little children today. There are bad people ready to teach them evil things. There are any number of diseases waiting to pounce upon and kill them. Poverty and cruelty and sufferings manifold befall them. Yet some children escape all these dangers. The poverty is very great and baby is half-starved, yet he manages to live. Disease takes hold of him and it looks as if he must die, but he doesn't. The evil about him is so great that it seems he must become a criminal, but he grows up honest and true. Parents are neglectful and brutal, yet he survives. Think of the multitudes who are born amidst poverty, brutality, disease, evil surroundings, and yet who become strong, healthy, good men and women. Isn't it a miracle? Isn't it because, like the Child Jesus, they have many friends to help them? God has been watching over them, and has sent good men and women to provide food for them when they were hungry, hospitals for them when they were sick, schools for them where they escaped from bad influences, homes for them when they were worse than homeless. God is ever watchful over his own.

Christmas Gifts. The beautiful story of the Wise-men bringing their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh to the Infant Jesus has led to the beautiful custom of making gifts on Christmas Day. It is a day when we can truly bring gifts to Jesus by remembering the friendless and the unfortunate. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me, he said.

Christmas is three months ahead, but it is none too early to prepare for our gifts to those in mission lands. What shall they be? During the Great War, you remember, books and magazines were solicited for our soldiers in the Training Camps. The New York Public Library published a list of those sent in and rejected, and among them were juvenile stories, Ruskin's Letters to Young Girls, annual reports of hospitals, and even a file of the Undertaker's Review! Let us give time and thought to the Christmas gifts we shall send this year, that they may be suitable ones. First of all, let us write to headquarters and find out just what sort of gifts the missionaries want for their boys and girls, and then we can get them ready to send off in ample time to reach their destination. (Write to Dr. Samuel D. Price, Supt. of Surplus Dept., World's Sunday School Association, 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City. Name your denomination that you may receive as introduction to the missionary in your church, and enclose a stamp for a reply.)

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Psalm 91.11.

Yet sure the babe is in the cradle blest,
Since God himself a Baby deigned to be.—Coleridge.

Yet have I brought a gift the Child
May not despise; however small;
For here I lay my heart today;
And it is full of love to all!—Eugene Field.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does Matthew's Gospel tell us about the birth and infancy of Jesus? 2. Where was Jesus taken by Joseph and Mary after their stay in Egypt? (Mt. 2.22, 23.) 3. What do we know about Jesus while a youth in Nazareth? (Lk. 2.40.) 4. How old was he when he talked with the learned doctors in the temple at Jerusalem? (Lk. 2.41-52.) 5. Where was Jesus baptized? 6. Why are

Christians baptized today? 7. How many temptations are recorded in our text? 8. What was "the holy city"? 9. Are you ever tempted to do wrong? 10. How do you conquer the temptation?

Note-Book Work. Begin a Life of Jesus Christ. Today write I. The Lesson Title; where Jesus was born; three statements about the visit of the Wisemen; two statements about the flight into Egypt; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE COMING OF THE KING AND AN ALARMED TYRANT

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There is an interesting story told about what happened at the birth of a son to the missionary Jessup in Beirut, Syria. This missionary had a brother who was practicing law in New York with a partner named King, the firm name being naturally King and Jessup. The new father, filled with pride, cabled the tidings to his brother in New York, the cablegram running something like this: "King Jessup, New York, son and heir born today."

The native servant, taking the message to the telegraph office in the city, deposited it on the operator's desk, together with the money for the tolls, and disappeared. The operator, as was the custom in Turkey, in those suspicious days, carried the message in to the censor before putting it on the wire. The gray-bearded censor, familiar with a dozen languages, gave it but a single glance. "Call me a carriage quick!" he shouted, struggling into his coat and sword. "Drive me to the Governor—at full speed," he called to the trembling coachman. Past the saluting sentries he dashed, and up the steps of the governor's palace.

"Excellency," he panted, thrusting the message before the eyes of the startled governor, "what do you think of this? It is treason. Deep, dark, damnable treason, Excellency, and here in our very midst. Look! Listen! It is addressed to some foreign ruler, some king—King Jessup, whoever he may be—and it informs him that a son and heir, a crown prince, was born in this very town today. It is doubtless a plot to seize the throne of His Imperial Majesty."

The old governor was a man of deeds, not words. "Summon the members of the council," he said, and orderlies clattered forth with orders to the various municipal officials to appear forthwith. In they came, and to them the governor revealed the treasonous plot.

The censor unearthed an ancient copy of the Almanach de Gotha, and down its list of sovereigns he ran his finger. "Here we find King Edward of England," he read, "and King Alfonso of Spain, and King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, not to mention two emperors and a czar, but of this King Jessup I can find no single mention."

Then a commandant rose and said: "I know the name well, this King Jessup of whom you speak. He is the king of those red Indians who inhabit that country of which the capital is New York, and to which the message is addressed."

The explanation seemed plausible. Then came the problem of locating and seizing the Indian heir apparent. "Why not get the messenger who brought the message?" suggested someone, saner than the rest. And within an hour, the servant, found in a coffee house, was arraigned before the council.

"Why not send for my master, the American missionary, Excellency?" he inquired humbly. "I doubt not that he can explain it all." So they summoned the mission worker, born and bred in those parts and speaking Arabic as his native tongue. To him they told their suspicions, gravely. And with equal gravity, he explained what the message really meant, for in Turkey gravity is a precious thing. So they drank the inevitable coffees, the signal of dismissal in the East, and made the inevitable profound salaams, and Jessup, the missionary, returned to dandle his first born on his knee.

In what ways does this account parallel the account of an alarmed tyrant in our lesson?

"The Right of Jesus to Be King." A missionary to Arabia tells the story of once meeting a converted Arab—a man of undoubted faith in Christianity, which he had proved by his works. The missionary was curious to know exactly what had led that man to become a Christian. He therefore asked him the direct question: "Tell me the reason for your faith? Give me not just the reason you would tell to a missionary, or to the Arabs, but which moves you in your own

heart!" Now in America a question like that, if asked among a company of church members, might elicit such answers as, "Because my parents were Christians," "That I may have peace of mind," "In order to go to heaven," or the like. But no sooner had the missionary asked that converted Arab the deepest cause and motive of religion in him, than, quick as a flash, he answered, "The right of Jesus to be King." That answer was an inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Why, fundamentally, are we Christians? Because of the right of Christ to rule over us. He has "bought us with his own blood."—Zion's Herald.

Where they Do not Know that the King Has Come. A teacher in the Philippines one morning after Christmas heard a little brown boy exclaim, "I kissed God last night," and when she questioned him to know what he meant, she learned that in the services at the Catholic church a beautifully dressed doll, which was called the "Baby Jesus," had been shown and reverently kissed by all the people. "How far those little ones are from knowing the real Christ!" she thought.

Over in China there is a city where still less of Christ is known. "Think of living in a land where, instead of the bright, happy Christmastide, there is kept up a devil's birthday!" writes one who has been there. "The greatest cathedral in China is dedicated to the devil. The great temple to 'the God of the Eastern Hell' is the great shrine to which rich and poor, officials and students, mothers and children, feel irresistibly drawn. Instead of a Christmastide, they celebrate a Devil-mas-tide. In place of the thought of a gift of divine love, their thoughts turn to the doings of the evil demon."

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Yet doth the star of Bethlehem shed
A lustre pure and sweet;
And still it leads as once it led,
To the Messiah's feet.
O Father, may that holy Star
Grow every year more bright,
And send its glorious beams afar
To fill the world with light—William Cullen Bryant.

It is God's will that Jesus should be the Ruler of our heart, and all who are wise lay at the feet of the King the gold and frankincense and myrrh of an obedient life.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do the headings of the Gospels mean? 2. When the people were baptized by John, what did the rite indicate according to Mt. 3.5? 3. Did Jesus have any sins to confess? 4. Why did he come to John to be baptized? 5. What did Jesus' baptism show as to his support of John? 6. What did John say about his baptizing and that of Jesus? (Mt. 3.11.) 7. Why was Jesus tempted? 8. Why are we tempted? 9. How did Jesus answer the question, How shall I use my powers? 10. The question, How shall I show my trust in God? 11. The question, How am I to win the world for God? 12. Why would Jesus never work a miracle for himself? 13. What does James 1.12 say about the tempted?

Note-Book Work. Begin a new book entitled The Life of Jesus as Told by Matthew. Today write I. The Birth and Childhood of Jesus.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE KING COMES AS A LITTLE CHILD

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Imagine a dark night and an observer who has never seen the sun. A star suddenly shows itself, and the observer hails it with delight. Presently the moon shines with all her gentle strength, and the observer says: "This is the fulfilment of the promise; can aught be lovelier, can the sky possibly be brighter?" In due course the sun comes up; every cloud is filled with light; every mountain is filled with a strange glory; every leaf in the forest is silvered; the sea becomes a burnished glass, and secrecy is chased from the face of the earth: under such a vision the observer knows that this is the true light—the sovereign, all-dominating flame.

I have given you a bit of word painting from the pen of Joseph Parker. He uses it for another purpose, but it aptly illustrates the change that we have seen in the revelation of light through the Bible. It was dark night in the time of the judges; we hailed with delight the coming of Deborah and Gideon and Saul,

but their times were as starlight to moonlight when compared with the days of David and Solomon. But now with the coming of the Christ child the sun has burst forth in all its loveliness, for this is the true light, even the light that lighteth every man, coming into the world.

The Half Has not Been Told. When Columbus discovered America he merely touched a few islands. The great continent he never saw, and the king and the people who praised him did not know a thousandth part of the great discovery he had made. Beyond the little islands that Columbus saw lay America, with its great rivers and mountains and prairies. Neither the Wisemen nor the shepherds dreamed of the empire over which that little Christ-child in the Bethlehem manger was to rule through the ages, the great men he was to inspire, the institutions and schools and colleges and nations that were to spread his fame.—Bishop John H. Vincent.

Are the Modern Representations of the Magi, the Educated Classes of the Occident, being Led to Christ? It is in cultured circles that one often finds the greatest indifference to Jesus and the densest ignorance of his person and work. University graduates hold aloof from the Son of God in such large numbers that the question is mooted from time to time just what the tendency of the educational world really is. Is present-day science hostile to Jesus? Does the philosophy of the modern schools extinguish the light of the star of Bethlehem? Does the observation of phenomena dim the eyes and chill the heart? Does a passion for investigation and the love of research unfit one to kneel at the feet of the King? These are questions to ponder over at Christmas time. We know that certain scholars of the East, by studying the phenomena of nature, were led by their study to the Christ in Bethlehem. Why should not study always, if conducted in the right spirit, lead the soul to him in whom all things consist? If the characteristic feature of the modern scientific spirit is docility, a willingness to study the facts and follow where they lead, may we not confidently expect that the world of scientific culture will sooner or later find itself casting its gold and frankincense and myrrh at the feet of the King? The passion for knowledge, which is the peculiar glory of our age, must lead men at last to the feet of the Teacher who calmly declares, "I am the truth."—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, in The World's Christmas Tree.

What Happened at the Beginning of Jesus' Life Went on Happening to the End. The Herods of Palestine were always in a state of perturbation, and were constantly plotting to kill him. The kings of political and social and ecclesiastical life were from the start distrustful of him. He jeopardized the security of their thrones. If he had been willing to play the part of a gentle and sympathetic physician, making war on the empire of pain, the whole land would have chanted his praises. But he claimed to be King! Had he been content to be the expounder of beautiful ideals, his countrymen would have listened to him with pleasure, and he would have gone with honors to his grave. But he claimed to be King! Had he been satisfied to be a friend and companion, consoling men in their difficulties, many roses would have been strewn on his path, and he would have won a high place on the roll of benefactors. But he claimed to be King!

He was always acting in a way which implied regal distinction. He had a manner of speaking altogether unique. He awed men, and at the same time exasperated them. They did not like to hear a peasant speak as though his word were final. He made demands on men's consciences which aroused opposition. He expected of them a more explicit obedience than had been demanded by Solomon or Moses. He did not hesitate to ask men to lay down their lives for him. This is the fashion of kings. He said one day to a company of disciples: "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you." Only monarchs speak with so peremptory an intonation.

To his contemporaries his claim to kingship seemed preposterous, and sometimes blasphemous. For he did not hesitate to claim to be monarch in the vast realm of the spirit. One day he sketched a picture of the judgment day, and he placed himself upon the throne. He told parables which implied that the final destinies of men were in his hand. A robber in the hour of death asked him to remember him when he came into his kingdom. On one of the last Sundays of his life Jesus allowed the crowd to chant around him the words of an ancient Hebrew poet: "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord!" They called him King, and he did not rebuke them.

It was this assertion of his kingship which caused the storm to break at last on Jesus' head. The crowd which thronged the door of Pilate's court-room shouted loud and long: "We found this man saying that he himself is Christ the King!" Above the Babel of discordant shoutings came clear and strong the words: "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar!" Pilate could not in safety release a man who was claiming to be a king. Tiberius Cæsar brooked no rivals. Setting the prisoner before the crowd, he exclaimed, "Behold your King!" and with one accord they screamed: "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" The chief priests chimed in, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar!" It was because Jesus claimed to be a King that the Jews and Romans decreed that he should die. Over his head was written in the three chief languages of the world: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Jesus Christ was crucified because he claimed to be King.

The tragedy narrated in the Gospels is only the story of a tragedy continued to the present hour. Jesus still claims to be King; but now as of old Herod is enraged against him, and the multitudes shout: "We will not have this man to reign over us!" As a genial and gentle teacher, Jesus has many admirers. His teachings are extolled by all who have minds capable of appreciating high and noble thought. The whole world is glad to praise him as an ethical guide without a peer. The multitudes are eager to praise and honor Jesus as a teacher, a philosopher, a poet, an idealist, a reformer, a lover of humanity. They hesitate only when they are asked to crown him King.

And yet it is at this point that he is most insistent and inexorable. Obedience is the one virtue for which he contends from first to last. Without obedience he promises no man salvation. It is only the obedient heart which is able to understand his words. Men are to show their love for him by obeying him, and it is by this obedience that the world is to be redeemed. No one is permitted to count himself a disciple who is not willing to obey. This is the tone of all kings. They demand swift and absolute subjection to their will. Their will is law, and peace and prosperity are found only in obedience. Jesus stakes everything on his kingship. His whole religion is foundationed on the fact that he is King.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The birth and childhood of Jesus. See the first six chapters of The Master's Way, by Charles Reynolds Brown; Chapters IV to VI of Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks; Chapters IV, VIII and IX of The Christ We Forget, by P. Whitwell Wilson; Chapter II of The Jesus of History, by T. R. Glover.

2. The re-incarnation of Christ. See Chapter III of Listening to God, by Hugh Black.

3. The Massacre of the Innocents. "We speak of Herod as a monster of iniquity, but he is not unique. He is only one example of a constantly-recurring type. The employer who subordinates the health of his workers to his profits, the Emperor who harnesses his people to dreams of aggression, the landlord who receives rent without securing sanitation, the mother who marries her daughter for money—all these are guilty in their degree of Herod's sin; nor is there any evidence that a child two years old in England today has a greater chance of life than a child of that age in Judea. We do not issue edicts of death, but we are careless, and the percentage remains.—P. Whitwell Wilson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When were the headings given to the four Gospels, and what do they mean? 2. Why was it necessary that Jesus should be baptized? 3. What was the connection between the baptism and the temptation? 4. Why was it necessary that Jesus should be tempted? 5. From what Scripture did Jesus quote in meeting the threefold temptation? 6. How are Jesus' words in 4.4 an answer to the first temptation? 7. Why would it have been wrong for Jesus to miraculously supply himself with food? 8. To cast himself down from the temple trusting to God to save him? 9. When did Peter say something to Jesus that was a temptation similar in force to that of the third temptation? (Mt. 16.23.) 10. How is the artfulness of temptation shown in the story? 11. What does Heb. 4.15 say about Jesus' temptation? 12. What does Heb. 2.18 say is the result of Jesus' temptation? 13. Is it a sin to be tempted?

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Golden Text

**This is my beloved Son, in whom
I am well pleased. Matthew 3.17**

LESSON Matthew 3.1 to 4.11 DEVOTIONAL READING Deuteronomy 6.4-16

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Luke 3.1-4; 13; Hebrews 2.18, 4.15

MATTHEW 3.13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John would have hindered him, saying, I have neeed to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; 17 and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

4.1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. 3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

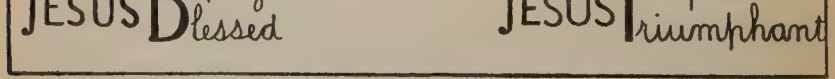
and,

**On their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS, 3.13-17. In the days when John was baptizing Jesus came *from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.* He came from Nazareth, where he had lived thirty years after the return from Egypt. John's baptism was "of repentance unto the remission of sins": why did Jesus who was sinless, submit to the rite? His baptism was (1) a public endorsement of John as a messenger of God. *John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now:* (2) *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Later, Jesus asked (Mt. 21.25), "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or from men?" It was of God, hence he submitted to the righteous ordinance. It was, moreover, (3) a rite which Jesus enjoined on his

William Hole

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

followers and therefore he would himself submit to it. And it was (4) for him a formal setting apart, a consecration, for his great mission.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway (immediately) *from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him.* "The open sky was the revelation to Jesus of new spiritual forces that lay within his reach. It was just as when Newton discovered the law of gravitation—heaven was opened to him: so Jesus saw the heavens opened."(F. B. Meyer). *And he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him.* By these words we are told that he was filled with the Spirit of God and consecrated to his ministry. *And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* See Mt. 12.18 and compare Ps. 2.7 and Isa. 42.1. In greater measure than before, Jesus realized now his divine Sonship and his Father's pleasure. In the words of Dr. G. A. J. Ross, "His self-consecration was rewarded as ours today by a clearer vision of the purposes of God, by a quiet consciousness of endowment with God-given capacity for his work, and by a vivid sense of holy and filial intimacy with the Divine Being himself." "The Gospel records and our own reflection assure us that Jesus must have learned who he was, little by little. The statement that he increased in wisdom is certification for this. And now the moment is one of crisis. A great, new, marvelous truth has entered into his life. And he is saying over and over to himself, trying to understand it in the fulness of its infinite meaning, 'I am the Messiah. I am the Christ! I am he for whom society has all along been looking and waiting! I am come in answer to the prayers of the ages! I am the Servant of the Highest, the Ambassador of Heaven, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world!' "

II. THE WITHDRAWAL TO THE WILDERNESS, 4.1. Immediately after his baptism.

> Musing and much revolving in his breast,
> How best the mighty work he might begin
> Of Savior to mankind, and which way first
> Publish his God-like office, now mature(Milton),

Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness. And straightway the Spirit *driveth him forth* into the wilderness, Mark says. Jesus yielded to the control of the Holy Spirit who had come to him in a special way at his baptism, and went to the wilderness to be alone, to meditate undisturbed upon the work God had given him to do. *To be tempted of the devil,* Matthew adds. The Greek word **Πειρασθῆναι**, means *to be tested, put to the proof.*

> But first I mean
> To exercise him in the wilderness;
> There he shall first lay down the rudiments
> Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
> To conquer sin and death, the two grand foes,
> By humiliation and strong suffrance(Milton).

"I do not know that our belief pro and con as to the devil has any special bearing upon our present duty," well observes Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull. "God in Christ is the only One, the only Power, that can help us overcome sin, whatever the source of sin is and from whatever the temptation to sin comes."

III. THE FIRST TEMPTATION, 4.2-4. *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.* Compare the fasting of Moses (Ex. 34.28) and of Elijah (1 K. 19.8), each of forty days' duration. The number forty may be "a round number" representing a long period of time. "We often say, 'I have told you forty times'—meaning an indefinite number of times." The three temptations here recorded are the climax of a long period of temptation during this long fast.

And the tempter came and said unto him. Two views are held by Christians in regard to the interpretation of the three-fold temptation. Some accept the account as having literally happened just as it is given in Matthew; they think of Jesus as face to face with Satan; as traveling with him from the wilderness to the pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, and then to a mountain where he could see all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and as exchanging words and Scripture quotations with him. In Ary Acheffer's representation of the scene Satan and Jesus are seated upon a peak, Satan with horns and hoofs and leer so Satanic that one at once exclaims, It could have been no temptation to Jesus to bow down before Satan. Even without such a pictorial representa-

tion it is impossible to believe that to listen to the suggestions of Satan in person, knowing that they were of the evil one, would have been any temptation to Jesus. Shall we not rather accept the other view, and give the account a spiritual interpretation, believing it describes a soul-struggle, a very real conflict, that took place in Jesus' mind at the beginning of his ministry? The story of his conflict must have been told to his followers by Jesus himself, and what more natural than for this Great Teacher to picture it in words that they could understand, to represent the inner spiritual struggle by a series of fitting images? To men whose vision is held prisoner by material things, spiritual things can be made real only by means of symbols.

If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. The word *if* may be taken in the sense of *since*—Since you know you have the power, why not make use of it for yourself? Why remain hungry when you have the power to make bread? Since you are the Son of God, well pleasing to the Father, should you not be lifted above ordinary human needs and suffering? The question Jesus had to settle was, Should he look out for himself, or should he trust his Father and accept whatever suffering his Father might send?

Jesus met this temptation by saying, *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* "Man shall not live—and I therefore, being Man, shall not"(Dods). Recall the setting of the words in Deuteronomy 8. The meaning of the quotation as used by Jesus is: The Israelites were hungry and were fed by the word of God, for he commanded his manna to fall; so I, who am hungry, may be miraculously fed if it is his will; my part is to trust to his providence, not to my own. In no instance did Jesus ever work a miracle for his own sake. Jesus' answer to the first temptation is, in short, Thou shalt trust.

IV. THE SECOND TEMPTATION, 4.5-7. *Then the devil taketh him into the holy city,* Jerusalem; *and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple.* Compare the way in which the vision of Jerusalem came to Ezekiel, Ezek. 8.1-3. *And saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written* (the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose, says Shakespeare), *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee* (Ps. 91.11), *and, On their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone* (Ps. 91.12). This figure of speech in the Psalm expresses the divine protection. This was a temptation to give a "sign" of his Sonship, such as the Jews later clamored for, Mt. 16.1.

Jesus said unto him, Again it is written (Dt. 6.16), *Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.* "Do not let it be a question whether God must save thee from dangers on which thou hast entered uncalled"(Meyer). Jesus' answer to the second temptation is, Thou shalt not tempt.

V. THE THIRD TEMPTATION, 4.8-10. *Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* "The career of ambition and worldly power is metaphorically expressed as the worship of Satan; but to the disciples, ignorant as they were, that career had to be presented in a flash of description and condemnation, such as would cut the way into their minds"(Ramsay). *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written* (Dt. 6.13), *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Jesus' answer to the third temptation is: Thou shalt obey.

VI. JESUS TRIUMPHANT, 4.11. *Then the devil leaveth him.* Luke adds (4.13) "for a season." Resist the devil and he will flee from you, declares James (4.7). *And behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Command that these stones become bread, 4.3. Oriental bread is made in small, thin, flat loaves or cakes, and many of the stones lying about in the wilderness resembled them in shape. The sight of the stones may have increased the pangs of hunger.

The Jews were looking for a Messiah who would perform just such a miracle as that of turning stones into bread. The rabbis said that when he came the trees would bear fruit all the year round, and a single grape would load a wagon and from it men would draw wine as from a cask.

Cast thyself down, 4.5. With this temptation it is interesting to compare a strange religious performance that is annually enacted at Kulu in the Himalayas. There a cliff overhangs a deep, precipitous gorge, one end of a rope is made fast to the rock, the other being secured to a stake on the other side of the gorge. The length of the rope between the two points is twenty-five hundred feet, and the difference between the height of the two ends is several hundred feet: thus a dangerous aerial slide is contrived. Before the performer, or *jheri,* as he is called, makes the perilous trip, the rope is thoroughly wet to prevent the saddle, through which the rope passes, from catching fire from the friction, and the lower end of the rope is wound with bits of carpet to check his speed near the stake. The terrific velocity of the descent is shown by the stream of smoke that trails from the wake of the saddle, despite the fact that the rope is wet. This slide through the air is supposed to reveal the will of the gods as to the crops of the approaching season. If the perilous trip is accomplished in safety, a plentiful harvest is assured. The ceremony is of ancient origin, and those who engage in it as *jheri* form a small caste by themselves.

The devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, 4.8. This is a common expression among the natives today, declares Mr. Wad-el-Ward. A man will take a visitor to the roof of his house to show him the beautiful view, declaring that "We can see the whole world from the top of my house."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. At Pentecost, when the people asked Peter what they must do to be saved, what was his answer? In whose name were they to be baptized? Unto what? How many were baptized? What have we heard about the baptism of Samaritans? Of Gentiles?

Between the Flight into Egypt and the Baptism in the Jordan. Upon the death of Herod, Joseph brought Mary and Jesus back to the land of Israel, but feared to settle in Judea because Archelaus, a son of Herod, was on the throne. They went therefore to Nazareth in Galilee. Luke tells us of Jesus' visit to the temple in Jerusalem when twelve years of age, where he sat in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. Eighteen years pass, and the only record we have of them is that meanwhile Jesus was advancing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus. Early in the summer of 27 A. D., when John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing, Jesus left his Nazareth home and came to John to be baptized. He was then a Man of thirty.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

It is at the Jordan that our New Testament really begins, Luther declares. Let one of your pupils copy this little map on the blackboard and trace the route of Jesus from his home in Nazareth eastward to the Jordan, down the eastern side of the valley to the first Bethany, beyond Jordan, fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. This is the site, according to recent scholarship, where John was baptizing as stated in Jn. 1.28. Then point out the traditional site of the baptism, at the ford about opposite Jericho. Here there is a heap of ruins which bear in Arabic the name of the Monastery of St. John, and here on the 6th of January, the day held sacred by the oriental church as the anniversary of Jesus' baptism, come crowds to bathe in the Jordan.

By the wilderness, to which Jesus withdrew immediately after the baptism, is meant the desolate, hilly region west of the northern end of the Dead Sea and of the Jordan near its mouth. Those who interpret the temptation literally ac-

cept the traditional Mons Quarantania (Latin, Mountain of the Forty Days) as the exceeding high mountain of verse 8.

The holy city was, of course, Jerusalem. The Arabs of today call it El-Kuds, The Holy. Assign paragraphs 83-84 and 20-22, and picture of the Wilderness of Judea, opposite page 14. In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. One of the practical problems of life is to know how far we should comply with established customs and conventional ways of both thinking and acting. Paul, who formulated a doctrine of freedom from the interference of men in the things of the spirit, yet professed that he would become all things to all men, and made expediency almost a principle. He was too shrewd and too sane a man to think that he could serve the cause he had at heart by running counter to every established custom, and offending every prejudice. In this attitude he was only following the example of Jesus, as illustrated in his words, "Suffer it to be so now." Our Lord did not renounce the religion of his fathers. He was a Reformer, an Innovator, and the effect of his work was to make old things pass away and make all things new. But the key-note of all his teaching was that he came not to destroy but to fulfil. He conformed with all the law as pious Jews did. He was circumcised: he kept the feasts and went up to Jerusalem as others did: he went to the synagogues as the custom was: he paid the temple-tax: and here we find him submitting to John's baptism, even when John protested that it was unseemly that he should do it.

Every religious form that could be useful to the spiritual life would be used by him. Just because he was above all forms, he would take them and fit them with new meaning; carry them forward into the new era.

There is a reverence which is becoming to us even when we see imperfections in the form which tempt us to protest. Our Master's view even of baptism was larger and grander than John's view; for to John it was the baptism of repentance, but to Jesus it meant also entrance into the fuller, larger life, the life of love; yet he said, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."—Condensed from The Gift of Influence, by Hugh Black.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Stuart Nye Hutchison tells us about a boy whom he knew who had lost his right hand.

He felt so badly over it that he did not want to see anyone. His father said, "I'm going to bring the minister in to talk to you." The boy said, "I don't want to see him." But the father brought him in. When the boy looked up he saw that the minister had no right arm. Where the arm ought to have been there was an empty sleeve. He came over to the boy and said, "I haven't any hand either. I lost mine when I was a boy, and I know how it feels." It wasn't hard for the boy to get acquainted with the minister, who "knew how it felt."

That is what makes the whole world love Jesus. He has suffered for us and he knows how to sympathize with us. He has been tempted, and he knows how to sympathize with us and help us in our temptations.

Two Scenes in Jesus' Life. Think of a valley with a river running through it, the deep Jordan valley and river. At one of the fords there is a great gathering. People line the banks on both sides. In the river stands the prophet John and to him comes a constant stream of people—soldiers, rulers, peasants, merchants, to be baptized. Overhead, a blue sky and sunshine. The second scene is very different. Here is no river, no shade, but a great wilderness of sunbaked rocks. There is no crowd here, but a great waste without a sign of a habitation. It is all wild and dreary.

The central Figure of these two scenes is Jesus. The people do not think so. To them he is just one of the crowd. But to John he is the Supreme Personality. At the sight of Jesus coming to him, John grows reverent and timid. John treats him as his superior—as a King. And the desert never held so great a Man.

And what is Jesus doing in these places? In the first he is making himself One with us. By baptism man confesses his sin and promises to lead a new life.

And Jesus takes his place beside him. Jesus has no need to be baptized; he has no sin to confess. "But if this is man's way," he says, "I'll take it: if this is what he has to do, then I'll do it." It is like a rich man who has no need to work, going into his own factory and working with his men, that he may be one with them, one of them. In the second scene, Jesus is fighting man's battle with temptation. "I'll live," he says, "as man lives. Man has to know hunger and thirst, and so will I. He has to fight evil, so will I."

Now in these scenes Jesus is our Example. Jesus submitted to the rite of baptism, and if we would be like him we must be baptized. Jesus met and conquered temptation, and temptations will come to us and like him we must conquer.

How did the two scenes end? The first one in a great gift and a great revelation. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and he heard the Father's words of approval of his action and choice of life. The second scene ended in a splendid victory. The devil left him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Both results will be ours if we follow in Jesus' footsteps. When we do the will of God, a new power and sense of divine approval is ours. When we triumph over temptation we know the divine ministry of comfort. When we resist sin we feel happy and exalted, and what is that but the realization of God's good pleasure in us?

Removing Temptation. My neighbor's small son, not yet four years old, appeared at my door one morning, and, after looking in a moment, announced: "Your screen's unlocked." I was busy, so I said, "All right." "Why don't you lock it?" he said. "In a minute I will," I answered. He was silent a little while. Then: "I wish you would come and do it now." "But why, Lawrence?" I asked. "Well," he sighed, "I might tum in, and my mamma said not to."—Delineator.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses, Matthew 3.16, 17.

Like children taking peeps at pantry shelves,
We think we're tempted when we tempt ourselves.
—Youth's Companion.

Temptation is the tempter looking through the keyhole into the room where you are living: sin is your drawing back the bolt and making it possible for him to enter.—Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman.

"When I'm tempted to do wrong,
Make me steadfast, wise and strong;
And when all alone I stand
Shield me with thy mighty hand."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Jesus born? 2. Into what country was he taken when an infant? 3. To what city of Israel was he brought back? 4. How old was he when he left Nazareth? 5. To what river did he go to be baptized? 6. Where was he when he was tempted? 7. To what city in Galilee did he return? 8. What city did he next make his headquarters? 9. On what lake was it? 10. Locate all these cities mentioned in our first three lessons this quarter.

Note-Book Work. II. The Lesson Title; three statements about the baptism of Jesus; three statements about his temptation; a statement about the help that his temptation is to us; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: JESUS OVERCOMING TEMPTATION Or, EARLY CONFLICTS AND DECISION

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Why is it that Lincoln is the best loved of all our Presidents? He has held this high honor because he saved our Republic from ruin, and because he dealt the final blow to human slavery. But he is loved by every American man and woman because he was an American like themselves—"a product of their soil, their home life, who had their trials to suffer and their difficulties to face. Instead of becoming sordid and mean and narrow-minded and critical and complaining, his love and sympathy and breadth of view and human understanding grew until these divinely human qualities literally ennobled him. Lincoln stands as a kind of immortal witness to every man of what that man himself may become, not in fame and statesmanship, but in personal character."

And it was true of Jesus that as far as the conditions of his human life went, he was just a Man like other men. He was born in a humble home, to a life of poverty and hard work, and he had to face trials and suffering and difficulties, and—amazing thought—to conquer temptations, just as we do.

Let us Make the Decision that Jesus Did. The first act by which one makes it clear to the world that he is indeed a follower of Jesus is called "confession." The act by which Jesus wishes his disciples to confess that they are his, is baptism, and that is the reason why every one who makes up his mind to follow Jesus is sooner or later baptized. When men in Jerusalem one day asked Simon Peter what he wanted them to do, his reply was, "Repent ye and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." In saying this he was saying: "Turn to Jesus and confess him."—Dr. C. E. Jefferson in My Father's Business.

A Temptation is a Testing. A firm installed in a building an apparatus consisting partly of a stack of steam pipes. The usual pressure was to be three pounds per square inch, and all went well for a time. One day, however, the pressure was considerably increased, and minute jets of steam were seen to be darting from invisible holes in the iron stack. The firm was asked to send a man down, and he admitted that, "owing to the pressure of business," they had omitted to *test* the pipes. All trustworthy engineers have their materials tested; they know just what weight, or pull, or bending, a rod, pipe, plate, etc., will sustain. The "testing-shed" is an important part of all big iron-works. The result? The engineer knows what size and shape of material he must use to make his bridge, etc., reliable (trustworthy) and safe.

It is the same with men. A man wants to practice as a doctor. We ask, "What qualifications has he?"—that is, what are the examinations or tests he has passed? A man wishes to be a sailor in the navy; he is measured, weighed, has his lungs, eyesight, hearing, etc., examined—i. e., he is tested. If he does not stand the test he is thrown out.

Christ had to be tested. This was his mission: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." But what could he, the Son of God, know about sin? Had he ever felt the power of temptation? Did he know how easy it was to fall and how hard to resist? He did know the power of temptation, "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Then we can trust him. When every iron rod in the bridges has been tested, we do not fear to run the train across. When the doctor has been tested we entrust our bodies to his care; and so on. Thus, as Christ has been tempted, we feel that he knows the power of sin, and when he offers to "save his people from their sins" we feel that he knows and understands our difficulties and dangers. "He has been tested, and we can trust him."

Do you know what happens to the rods that won't stand the engineer's testings? They are "scrapped"—thrown on the scrap-heap. And if you want to avoid being "scrapped" when tested you must resist by Christ's help and by the Word of God.—Adapted from an article in the Sunday School Chronicle by W. D. Bavin.

Let Us Fly the Flag of our Victor. In a certain large steel works a big muscular Scotchman called "Striker Jones" held the position of boss-striker. Nearly all the men in his department were hard drinkers, and he was not an exception to the rule. But a change took place. He became a Christian; and when pressed by his fellows to take a drink he refused. "I shall never take a drink ony mair, lads," he quietly said, "na drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God." And they said, "Wait a bit, till the hot weather comes—till July. When he gets as dry as a gravel-pit he will give in. He can't help it." But right through the hottest months he toiled on, the sweat pouring in streams, yet he never seemed to be tempted to drink.

At last the time-keeper of the mill spoke to him as he was giving in his time. He said, "You used to drink a good bit. Don't you miss it?"

"Yes," he said, very emphatically.

"How do you manage to keep away from it?"

"Well, just this way. It is now ten o'clock, isn't it? Well, today is the twentieth of the month. From seven till eight I asked that the Lord would help. He did. And I put a dot down on the calendar right near the twenty. From eight till nine, he kept me, and I put down another dot. From nine to ten he has kept me, and now I gie him the glory as I put down the third dot.

Just as I mark these dots I pray—'O Lord, help me; help me to fight it off for another hour.'"

That's the fighting spirit for temptations. There must be two factors on the winning side in that fight. There must be a determined will, and there must be alongside the Man who was tempted in all points as we are, and who never failed, and who never fails. Let it be said very plainly that neither one is enough without the other.—Condensed from Quiet Talks about the Tempter, by S. D. Gordon.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Temptation is the raw material of glory. —Taber.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our struggling would be losing,
Were not the right Man by our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.—Martin Luther.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus;
Another thing to fall.—Shakespeare.

"A man may be tempted from without, but he is overcome from within."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which of the Gospel writers were apostles? 2. How did the other two get their knowledge of Jesus' life? 3. The sea on which Capernaum was situated had three names: what are they? (Mt. 4.18; Jn. 21.1; Lk. 5.1.) 4. What can you learn about this Sea of Galilee? (In the Master's Country, pages 9 and 10.) 5. What did Jesus say of himself as the Light of the World which verse 16 recalls? (Jn. 8.12.) 6. When John was baptizing in Judea, to whom did he point out Jesus as "the Lamb of God"? (Jn. 1.35-42.) 7. What did the two men do? 8. Whom did each bring to Jesus? 9. How does that first call differ from the one in our lesson? 10. Why did Jesus tell Peter and Andrew that he would make them "fishers of men"? 11. Is it necessary today to leave one's nets, one's occupation to become a "fisher of men"? 12. How can you obey Jesus' words in our lesson?

Note-Book Work. II. The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: DEDICATION TO THE KINGDOM IDEAL

Note. The topic chosen by our Lesson Committee. "Victory over Appetite, Pride, and Ambition," seems, I think, to give a mistaken interpretation of the temptations of Jesus. Hunger, or appetite, is a perfectly natural sensation, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in the desire to satisfy it. "Victory over appetite" seems to infer a temptation to excess. Jesus' first temptation was to exempt himself from the ordinary conditions of humanity, to avoid suffering by working a miracle for himself, and further, as his answer declares, to seek to achieve blessedness through material rather than spiritual good. Jesus' second victory was not over pride, a desire to "show off" and gain applause, but over a temptation by a presumptuous act to put God's care to the test. Jesus' third victory was not over ambition, but over a temptation to lower his standard a little, to gain dominion by an easy way that would have spelled defeat.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In the books of the Old Testament which we studied for six months we were seldom far from the sound of battle. In the book of the New Testament which we now study, we have no battle cry, but the fighting has by no means ceased. Only now the eye is turned inward upon all the fighting going on there. "The heart is a big battleground, a vast Armageddon, where principalities and powers contend. This is the special conflict to which the New Testament invites, for which it furnishes the weapons, supplies the strategy, holds forth the prizes. In this 'good fight' we may always be sure the Lord is on our side, and to be more than conquerors here means glory, honor, immortality."

At the very beginning of his public ministry, the fight began in the heart of Jesus. He was baptized, consecrated to his life work, and then he was tempted to carry on his work in the easy way, the way that was not his Father's will, that was not the ideal of the Kingdom of God which he had come to establish. No one was present with Jesus at his three-fold temptation, for he was "alone with the wild beasts," and the account was evidently that given to his disciples by Jesus himself, of the crises in his own inner life.

Baptism and Temptation were Parts of One Experience. In the one Jesus received the call and consecration, in the other he considered the nature of the call, the way it must be accomplished, the goal to which it would ultimately lead him. The baptism had launched him upon his mission of redeeming the world. How should he accomplish it? His burden and responsibility as well as his joy must have overwhelmed him at this time, and in the tumult of emotions the need of being alone, far from the haunts of men, where he could commune with himself and with his Father, must have been imperative.

To a great character, says Jean Paul Richter, great joys and great sorrows serve as heights from whence to survey the whole pathway of life. Such a height was the baptism of water and of Spirit to Jesus, and in the forty days in the wilderness he surveyed the whole pathway which he was to tread. What method should he use? How should he begin his unique work? Where would this course and that course lead him? Which was in accordance with the will of his Father?

Towards the close of his life Jesus told the multitudes how exacting was discipleship and bade them count the cost in the beginning. Which of you, he said, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? In the Wilderness after the baptism Jesus himself was first counting the cost before he undertook his life work.

Temptations of Those who are Dedicated to the Kingdom Ideal. Our Lord's temptations in the wilderness are all of the nature of universal temptations; that is to say, they are the temptations of universal humanity—not, indeed, of humanity on its lower level, not the temptations of humanity as it strives to release itself from the merely brutal, but certainly the temptations of humanity as humanity is an upward-striving humanity, as humanity labors to bring in the Kingdom of God.

You will never rightly understand our Lord's temptation in the wilderness until you give full weight to the fact that he was led by the Spirit to that temptation, and unless you give full weight to the fact that it was immediately precedent to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

We are thinking now of peace problems, problems of social reconstruction. We are thinking how we can bring about that better England, that better Europe, that better America, that better world which we hope may be. That is to say, we are seriously thinking of how in our measure and degree we can labor for the bringing in of the Kingdom of God, or at any rate we are considering how we can produce the conditions of the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. And be sure at such a time we shall be assailed by exactly those temptations which assailed our Lord, the representative Man, the great Elder Brother of humanity.

Let us take the first temptation, and try to understand what it means,—the tempation to turn stones into bread. The way in which our Lord explains the temptation is that it is a temptation to suppose that man's true life depends upon the apparatus of outward things and does not depend upon the perpetual intercourse between the created and the Creator. Make the fullest outward provision that you can, and a man may still starve and die. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Because man is spiritual, because man is eternal, therefore man's deepest and unending need is need of God. To put it into modern language, our Lord warns us that however right and necessary it may be that we should care, for instance, for social reform, for good housing, for sanitary cities, for reasonable wages, for reasonable hours of labor, it is not in and through these things alone that man can live.

Have not our sons and our daughters taught us this—perhaps above all our daughters? We lapped them about, I will not say with undue luxury, but with comfort, with pleasure. We wanted them to have a good time. Cultured they were, educated, charming, delightful; and yet, I bear witness, discontented. In years past one part of my task has been to try and fight the battle of the daughters against their mothers, the mothers who said, "Why, haven't the girls got everything that they want? What do they want more? Why do they want to leave home? Why cannot they be content?" And the daughters would say bluntly, very often undiscerningly, but nevertheless seriously, "We are reaching

out for something more." They were not content simply to be fed and to be clothed. And then the war came, and their brothers went, and the sisters left their comfortable homes and made what some people would call a great sacrifice. They did hard work in France, in Egypt, in Salonika. Now they tell us that if it were not for the great sadness of the young lives that have been laid down—their brothers and sweethearts and sometimes their fathers—they had never before been so happy in their lives, for they found a great thing to do, and they did it.—W. E. Swayne.

The Temptation to Use Illicit Means in the Interests of the Heavenly Kingdom. Dr. J. H. Jowett characterizes the third temptation, as "The Soul in the Market"; the tempter suggests a bargain and makes an offer; he proposes a profitable exchange, and for the treasures of the soul he offers the treasures of the world.

"Think how much the young Nazarene might accomplish by the possession of a carnal rule. He could ride abroad redressing human wrongs. He could strike the weapon from the hand of the oppressor. He could destroy the tyranny of iniquitous taxation. He could lighten the burden of the poor. Wherever men were in servitude, he could lead them into glorious liberty. 'All these things will I give Thee!' What are the terms of the exchange? 'If thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The devil is seeking his exchanges in the region of the soul. 'Alter thy soul posture. Readjust thy secret homage. Change thy spiritual inclinations. Dilute the stringency of thy holiness. Change thy heavenly principles for loose expediences. Change thy impossible ideals for working compromises. Change thy serene wisdom for sharp subtlety. Change thy unvarnished truth for the oil of flattery. Make more of appearances. Let life be more a game, a scheme, an artifice, and less of an exalted crusade. 'All these things I will give thee,' if thou wilt only play my game. Thou shalt appoint the goal, but mine shall be the way to reach it. Thine shall be the end, but mine shall be the means.' Such were the terms of the proposed exchange.

"And the answer? The Master's answer came sharp, immediate, peremptory, and absolute: 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' Our Master would not change the inclination of his soul by the shadow of a turning. He would not wipe out the Ten Commandments and write ten compromises in their place.

"Let no one imagine that with the defeat of this temptation the same temptation never returned. If I interpret the Master's life aright, the temptation returned again and again, with precisely the same enticements, always changing its attire, but always with the same motive, and armed with the same destructive quest. 'But he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem,' and he walked the thorny, flinty road to Calvary and the Cross, and this was his one response to all alluring besetments by the way: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'"

Suggestion for Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The training that comes in hours of solitude. A man who has dealt much with boys and been very successful in making noble men of them, says that "the lonely job" is one of his best agencies, and by that he means the task in the field, the barn, the shop, the engine room, where a boy is sometimes alone for hours at a time, with opportunity to think as he works.

2. The agents in temptation. See Chapter III of The Forgiveness of Sin, by Dr. George Adam Smith; Chapters XV to XIX of The Christ We Forget.

3. How to meet temptation. The man who cannot use his will has lost the greatest weapon against temptation. See Quiet Talks about the Tempter, by S. D. Gordon; Chapters IX to XI of Sermons for the Church Year, by Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which of the Gospel writers were eye-witnesses of the events they record? 2. What was the authority of the other two Evangelists? 3. What events occurred between the last lesson and this as recorded in Jn. 1.19 to 3.36? 4. Who is the John referred to in verse 12? 5. Where and why was John the Baptist imprisoned? (Mt. 14.3; Mk. 1.14; Lk. 3.20; Jn. 3.24.) 6. What reason does Luke give for Jesus' leaving Nazareth for Capernaum? (Lk. 4.16-31.) 7. What is the force of the quotation from Isaiah? 8. What is the force of Jesus' words in verse 17? 9. What do Jesus' words in verse 19 mean? 10. Must every one leave his nets, his occupation, in order to obey Jesus' command?

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

Golden Text

Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4.17

LESSON Matthew 4.12-25 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 61

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Mark 1.16-20; Luke 5.1-11

MATTHEW 4.12 Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
Toward the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,
16 The people that sat in darkness
Saw a great light,
And to them that sat in the region and shadow of death,
To them did light spring up.

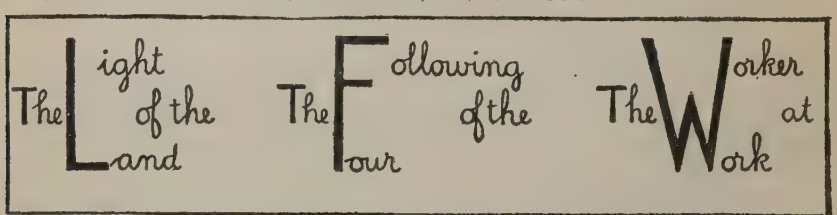
17 From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. 24 And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and *from* beyond the Jordan.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. CAPERNAUM MADE JESUS' HEADQUARTERS, verses 12-16. After his Judean ministry, which John records in his Gospel, Jesus *heard that John the Baptist was delivered up* (see Mt. 14.3-5; Lk. 3.19, 20) and *withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth,* where the people had attempted to kill him (Lk. 4.16-30), *he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the Sea* of Galilee. This city henceforth became his headquarters. It lay *in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali,* that is, on the boundary between the territories given these two tribes when the Israelites settled Canaan. When Jesus began to teach in this northern part of Canaan, then, Matthew declares, was fulfilled the saying of

Isaiah the prophet. Dr. Lyman Abbott's paraphrase of verses 15 and 16 is helpful. "The territories of Zebulun and Naphtali, the region about the Sea of Gennesaret, the country beyond Jordan, yea, the whole of Galilee, which you contemptuously designate Galilee of the Gentiles, whose inhabitants sit in the darkness of ignorance and under the gloom of impending death, from which there is no one to deliver, shall be the first to see the light which the Messiah brings." Note that *beyond the Jordan* is spoken by Isaiah from the point of view of the Eastern nations, and means west of the Jordan; and *the shadow of death,* as in the 23rd Psalm, stands for *deep darkness.*

II. MATTHEW'S FIRST RECORDED UTTERANCE OF JESUS AS A PUBLIC TEACHER: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AT HAND, verse 17. *From that time,* from his settlement in Capernaum, *began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* The exact meaning of *repent* is *change your minds.* Change your minds, said Jesus, *for* the Kingdom of heaven is here. For many centuries the Jews had been looking forward to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, and by this phrase they meant the restoration of their nation to independence and power under divine leadership. They were now subjects of Rome, their land was a Roman province ruled by a Roman procurator. And Jesus bids them make a radical change in their way of thinking, and learn the truth which he sought to teach them, that the Kingdom of Heaven is neither a geographical nor a political realm, but it is a spiritual realm. It is the Kingdom of the Father's rule in the hearts of men. "Now that the King had appeared, had not the Kingdom come? Nay, it never comes till it is welcome. Therefore we still pray, Thy Kingdom come."(David Smith.)

III. MATTHEW'S SECOND RECORDED UTTERANCE OF JESUS AS A PUBLIC TEACHER: FOUR DISCIPLES CALLED TO SHARE THE TASK OF THE KINGDOM, verses 18-22. *Walking* one day *by the Sea of Galilee,* Jesus saw two brothers, *Peter and Andrew, casting* (literally, throwing out) *a net into the sea; for they were fishers.* They were letting the net down and lifting it up, first on one side of the boat and then on the other. "The successful use of this net," says Dr. W. M. Thompson, "requires a keen eye, an active frame, and great skill in throwing. The fisherman must, too, be

Casting and Hauling Nets on the Sea of Galilee

patient, watchful, wide-awake, and prompt to seize the exact moment to throw; these were qualities needed by fishers of men." *And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.* This was not the first time they had seen Jesus: see the Historical Background. "The fisherman Peter did not lay aside his nets, but changed them"(Augustine). *And they straightway left the nets, and followed him.* "Mark both their faith and their obedience," says Chrysostom, the great fourth century preacher of Constantinople: For though they were in the midst of their work—and ye know how greedy a thing fishing is—yet when they heard his command they delayed not, they procras-

tinated not, they said not, 'Let us return home and converse with our kinsfolk,' but they forsook all and followed," Equally obedient were James and John, the next pair of brothers whom Jesus called.

IV. JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING, verses 23-25. The triumphal progress of the ministering King, Matthew next records in a general account of his preaching and healing in Galilee. Jesus taught *in their synagogues,* for while sacrifices were offered only in the temple at Jerusalem every town and village had its synagogue for worship. *He went about preaching the gospel,* the good news, *of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people.* The fame of Jesus as a Physician spread throughout Syria, and *they brought unto him all that were sick, holden* (held under the power of) *with divers* (various) *diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They were fishers, verse 18. Josephus tells us that in the time of Jesus Christ there were several hundred fishing boats on the Sea of Galilee. As the Jewish population of Palestine increases today, this industry becomes more important. Fish from the Sea of Galilee are taken to Samaria and Jerusalem, and large quantities even to Damascus.

Come ye after me, verse 19. Many Greek philosophers instructed their pupils as the latter followed them from place to place.

And they straightway left their nets and followed him, verse 20. We might think it a difficult matter for any one to leave his occupation and without means of earning a livelihood, follow a leader from place to place. But we must remember that the climate of Palestine is more genial than ours, and that food and clothing and shelter there are more simple. Yet there was sacrifice of comfort and home ties. One who lightly said to Jesus, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," Jesus reminded that "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did we learn in our first Quarter's lessons about the way Peter and John fished for men? What did we learn about the death of James?

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry. Matthew follows his account of the consecration and testing of Jesus at the Jordan and in the wilderness with an account of the beginning of the Galilean Ministry. That about a year intervened between the two we should not know were not for the record of the Judean Ministry given in Jn. 1.19 to 3.36.

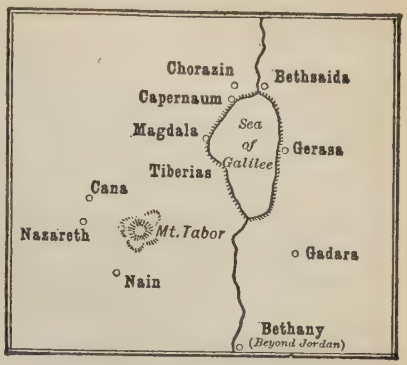
John the Baptist was arrested by Herod and imprisoned in the castle of Machaerus, and Jesus withdrew into Galilee, going through Samaria, as John tells us. Jesus probably went to Galilee in the fall of A. D. 27, and during the winter left Nazareth for Capernaum. Luke tells the reason for the change of headquarters. Jesus had preached in the synagogue of his early home and been rejected by the people, who thought the One whom they had known in his youth could not be the Messiah (Lk. 4.16-31).

The Call to Permanent Discipleship. The first call came to the disciples many months earlier. After his victory in the wilderness Jesus remained for some time in the neighborhood of John the Baptist. One day when John was baptizing at Bethany beyond Jordan, he bore his testimony to Jesus as the Messiah, and pointed him out to two of his own disciples, Andrew and John, as "The Lamb of God." These two followed Jesus, and on the morrow Andrew brought his brother Simon Peter, and probably John then brought his brother James, to Jesus. Philip was called, and be brought Nathanael. It was after Jesus settled in Capernaum that he called the four fishermen to permanent discipleship, the nucleus of his band of followers.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Syria of which Palestine is a part, extended along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean from Antioch on the Orontes to the border of Arabia.

The three political divisions of Palestine at this time were: (1) the Province of Judea on the south, which included Judea and Samaria, west of the Dead Sea and the River Jordan; (2) The Province of Galilee, which included Galilee north of Samaria and west of the Jordan, and Perea, east of the Lower Jordan and the Dead Sea; and (3) small principalities east of Galilee and north of Perea.



Nazareth lies west of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. It was about ten miles from Nazareth to Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. The word *Decapolis* means *the league of the ten cities:* with one exception, they were all in Perea. Assign paragraphs 1, 72-76, 119, 155, 162 and 170 of Palestine in The Time of Christ.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The all-important work of a Sunday-school teacher is "fishing for men." The all-important matter in "fishing for men" is to have the desire to learn how to be successful. The all-important method in becoming successful is to begin. When Mr. Moody was asked how to begin, he replied, "Go at it."

A boy who wants to skate may read instructions upon skating and may watch expert skaters gliding over the ice, but he can never skate himself until he makes the attempt and perseveres in his attempts despite his falls. He who would lead others to Christ may—and should—read about how to do personal work, and may—and should—study the methods of successful workers, but he will never himself become a "fisher of men" until he actually tries the work himself and perseveres in the work.

What success would life insurance companies have if they gave up their solicitors and depended solely upon public address and printed literature? To the latter is comparable a teacher's work; to the former, his talks with his pupils one by one.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: JESUS CALLS FOUR FISHERMEN
Or, JESUS TEACHING AND HEALING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The early Christians were persecuted because they were followers of Jesus Christ. Do you remember how Peter and John were put in prison? The time came when men were afraid to talk about being Christians where the Romans could hear them and put them to death. When a man wished to make it known to another that he was a follower of Christ he would stoop down and with his finger draw a fish in the dust of the road. Our lesson tells us why a fish was a good symbol for a Christian.

Jesus the Preacher and Physician. It is unusual to find a doctor who is also a preacher, and a preacher who is also a doctor. Yet there are men who fill both positions—the medical missionaries of today. Did you ever think of Jesus as the first Medical Missionary?

They came to Jesus in crowds to hear him and to be healed. They came from Galilee: where was this province? They came from Judea: where was this province? And they came from beyond the Jordan. They brought to him their sick, their demoniacs, their palsied, and he healed them. There was never a case too difficult for him. How happy Jesus must have been to be able to send blind people away seeing, dumb people talking, lame people walking. Only a few, however, believed and followed him. But Jesus was content, for he knew that through his true followers all the world would finally be brought to the knowledge of him as the Christ.

When Jesus was walking one day by the Sea of Galilee, he called two men. Who were they? What were they doing? What did he say to them? What did he mean? What did they do? When did they do it? What other two brothers did he call? What did they do?

"Follow Me." In harbors a pilot boat goes out to meet an incoming steamer and when she reaches her the pilot climbs up a ladder which is let down for him on the outside of the steamer. Then he goes to the pilot house and guides the steamer safely to her dock. One time there was a fierce gale in the Liverpool Harbor and it was too rough for the pilot to board a vessel in the Channel. So he ran up the signal "Follow me," at the masthead of his pilot boat, and soon the boat sailed up the river with eight or nine vessels of all sorts and sizes following. Every vessel reached her dock safely; for all the helmsman had to do was to keep his eye on the pilot boat and steer straight in the course she was taking. That is our task. Jesus sends us the signal, "Follow me," and if we direct our course just as he does, we shall reach our life's journey's end in safety.

Your Feet will Follow Your Eyes. In the open square of a village a company of boys were drilling. With short, crisp commands they were put through their motions by a young man who had just returned from a training camp with a lieutenant's commission. At last, with just a note of impatience in his voice, he cried: "Fellows, quit looking down at your feet! Eyes to the front! Your feet will follow your eyes!"

"Your feet will follow your eyes." As I heard him I remembered once seeing a man walk a rope across a city street. He stepped from a window and walked high over the heads of the crowd and safely at last into a window on the other side. And he did not once look down. He looked straight along the rope to his goal, and his feet followed his eyes to safety.

Try it in the snow in your yard. Walk across the yard looking at your feet, and see what a crooked path you make. Now cross, with your look fastened to some definite object. See how your feet follow your eyes and how straight you go.

Our feet do follow our eyes. We look steadily at what is good, and we walk towards it. We fix our eyes on what is wrong, and we find ourselves drawing near it. This is why boys and girls ought to have heroes and heroines. By keeping good men and women in our sight we become like them. This is what the Bible means when it bids us run "looking unto Jesus." As we look to him each day, we come ever nearer to him and grow more like him. Our feet follow our eyes.—Darwin F. Pickard, in The Congregationalist.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Luke 5.11b (or Mt. 4.23).

Promptness adds great value to obedience.

If you would be "manly," be sure of your man, and follow the only perfect Man the world has ever seen.—James Wells.

We are as truly summoned by the King to be his followers as were the disciples.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Instead of conceited people, what does Jesus wish his followers to be? 2. Instead of bullies? 3. Instead of quarrelsome folk? 4. Instead of useless, unsympathetic people? 5. Instead of evil-minded people? 6. Instead of domineering people? 7. Instead of indifferent people? 8. Instead of people who are easily turned aside from following him?

Note-Book Work. III. The Lesson Title; two statements about Jesus as Teacher and Healer; two statements about the call of four disciples; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES; ENLISTMENT FOR SERVICE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. When you see a number of children about the same age in a long thin line, one after the other, cutting strange capers and sometimes doing dangerous things, you know that they are playing "Follow My Leader." One after another drops out in disgrace as the leader does more and more difficult things, until a few are left who will follow anywhere that he will lead. There is no fun in this game unless the leader is a good one. A good leader can get many enthusiastic followers.

Men and women are like children in this. They, too, will follow good leaders. Today we hear the best and wisest of all leaders calling men to follow him.

Enlistment for Service. If you were to hear some one calling on the street

corner, you would all go near to hear what was wanted. If you were to like very much the man or woman who called, and if you were to push forward saying, "We would like to serve under you," and were then accepted, what would be the first question you would ask? That is, of course, the first question that Peter and the other followers asked of Jesus.

If the leader should answer you, "The work is to translate Sanskrit manuscripts," or "The work is to calculate solar eclipses," what would you do? But if he should say, "The work is to marshal the children of the town in a parade," or, "The work is to make change at a fair for destitute orphans in Belgium," or "The work is to read aloud to blind hospital patients," your answer would be different. Why?

What did Jesus tell Peter the work would be? How was that a suitable reply for Peter? Would it have been a good reply if Peter had been a shepherd? What reply might a shepherd have received? A teacher?

In what way is every disciple of Jesus a fisher? Has anyone ever fished for you? What was the bait? In what way is every disciple of Jesus a shepherd? Try other professions and see whether a figure of speech taken from each might be used to describe the work of Christ's disciples.

One might put all occupations into two lists—those that cannot be thus used, and those that can. Look over the work to be done: the forester helps the discontented to comfort by providing material for homes; the physician helps the sick to walk; the artist helps the unhappy to joy. Can you find any such figures for gamblers? Or for thieves? Try a few more professions.

The work that your Leader calls his followers to is really to serve mankind by helping the ignorant to knowledge, the idle to work, the tired to rest, the discontented to comfort, the lost to their home, the unhappy to joy, the wicked to righteousness, the failure to success, the useless to usefulness, the sick to health. What shall we add to this list?

Think of some good disciples of Jesus you know, and show how, in their daily work, just by following their calling, they are proving themselves his followers. To which of the services in the list we have just given does each contribute?

Having chosen your Leader, you must follow him and do his work. Jesus said to Peter, "Leave your nets and follow me." He says to you, "Stay by your nets, your school, your home, your business, and follow me; do everything in my Spirit, and do whatever comes to your hand to do for others for my sake." How can we as a class go to work together as followers of Jesus?

The Disciples Followed Straightway.

"Child, follow me," the Master said,
As he knocked full loud at my chamber door;
But the morn was fair, and my heart was gay,
"I'll dally a while on the primrose way,
And I'll come," said I, "when the morning's o'er."

"Child, follow me," the Master said,
As he lingered patiently at the gate;
Gray shadows were falling, the night was near;
"Life's joys are so sweet, and my friends so dear,
I will come," said I, "when the night is late."

"Child, follow me," the Master cried,
As he walked away through the darkness deep;
And the night had fallen, and the birds were still;
"Linger," said I, "at the foot of the hill,
And I'll come when the world is hushed in sleep."

"Master, I come," I cried at length,
"Heart weary to serve at thine own dear side,
Thou hast called me long, but I come at last."
But mine eyes were dim and my strength was past,
And I could not follow the Crucified.—Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which Gospel gives the great discourses of Jesus and what are they? 2. What is the usual name for the long address in Matthew which covers chapters 5-7? 3. What is the usual name for the group of texts that begin with "Blessed"? 4. Why are they so called? 5. If you could have all that you think you want would you be satisfied? 6. If you could have all that God knows you want, would you be satisfied? 7. How many of the qualities Jesus wants his followers to have depend upon circumstances? 8. Who are the meek? 9. Who are the poor in spirit?

Note-Book Work. III. The Call of the First Disciples.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: SHARING THE KINGDOM TASK Or, JESUS ENTERS UPON HIS MISSION

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The lookout on a ship descried another ship with sails gone and masts broken. He could see no signs of life upon it. A boat was lowered and sailors were sent to make an investigation. On the deck of the disabled ship they found one man with sunken cheeks, glassy eyes and bony hands—a mere bundle of bones, yet alive. They took the starved man back with them, and when they had restored him to consciousness his lips began to move and he whispered faintly, "There is another man—there is another man."

The first thought of the saved man was of the other who needed saving. "That is how it ought to be with us and the great salvation of the gospel," comments the Rev. J. D. Jones in referring to this incident. "Saved ourselves, we ought to remember 'there is another man,' and seek to save him. That 'other man' is in the same street with ourselves, next door to ourselves, in the same house with ourselves, and we have not troubled ourselves about him. Friends, let us remember 'there is another man.' Having found the Christ ourselves, let us tell others about him."

The passage from Matthew's Gospel which we study today contains the charter for all "personal work," as we now call "fishing for men," and gives the names of the first group of men whom Jesus instructed in the great art.

What is the only Effective Way of Spreading the Kingdom, or indeed Any Great Cause? It is the way of these first disciples. You speak of the doctor's cures, of the healing powers of the seaside place, of the charm of a song, of the beauty of a poem, of the power of a book or speaker, and others believe your words and act upon them. "Do you love Jesus, father?" a child once said. "Why do you ask?" "I never hear you speak of him," was the artless reply. Does not that explain much? Silence is no argument for anything. The things and persons we believe in we talk about. Would not churches grow faster in numbers and influence if the members imitated Andrew and Philip, and spoke of the power and sweetness of the Gospel, and brought others to the Lord in whom they trust?

It has been said that "John Inglesant" reached its audience through a widely circulated photograph of Mr. Gladstone holding a copy of the book in his hand. Men are greatly influenced by the testimony of those they respect and honor. They reason: "If he sees all this in Christ, then there must be something I have missed, some great good which I ought to possess." So our witness becomes the avenue by which Christ enters the souls of others. In this work he depends on us. "If you are light," says Dr. Maclaren, "shine." The lighthouse keeper takes no pains that the ship tossing far away at sea may behold the beam that shines from his lamp; all that he does is to tend it and feed it. That is all you and I have to do—tend the light, and not like cowards, cover it up. Modestly, but yet bravely, carry out your Christianity and men will see it. Do not be as a dark lantern, burning with the slides down, illuminating nothing and nobody. Live your Christianity, and people will see Christ in it and be drawn to him.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus said, "Come unto me." At the close he said to his followers, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Come! Go! There is the double action that makes a healthy, growing Church. First we are to come to Christ, the Centre and Head. Then we are to go and scatter the truth we have found. We come for light, and go to shine. We come for vision, and go to testify. We come for healing, and go to tell others of the

Healer. Here is the double beat of the Christian heart that keeps the life-blood in circulation.

Is not the real cause of the decay of the Church to be found in the lack of this personal testimony? Browning, in Ferishtah's Fancies, tells how Dervish Ferishtah went into the woods, and saw an eagle swoop down to its nest and put food in the eaglet's beak. Ferishtah said, "That is what God is doing for me! I must open my mouth wide and he will fill it." So he went into the desert and waited for God to feed him. But he nearly died of hunger. Then when his strength was lowest an angel appeared to him and said, "You have misconceived the incident which you saw. You are not the eaglet but the eagle. You are not to be fed, but to feed others."

"'Sluggard, arise! work, eat, then
Feed who lack.'
Waking, I have arisen, work I will.
I starve in soul;
So may mankind; and since men congregate
In towns, not woods, to Ispahan forthwith!"

It is profoundly true. Life becomes burdensome and declines unless spent in constant outgo. The deepest joy of life is only found when we use it up in unselfish service. We grow in grace, and power and knowledge, not merely by what we hear, but by the translation of the hearing into witnessing. Go and tell others that Jesus is precious and you widen his Kingdom and your own soul at the same time.—Editorial in Sunday School Chronicle.

"Count on Me!" The story is told of a young college student, uninterested in art, as such, who was persuaded by his mother to visit an art gallery, where "The Man of Galilee" was being exhibited. After studying the masterpiece from every angle, the young man turned to go. One of the attendants, who had watched his interest and earnestness, said to him, "It is a great picture." "Yes, it is a great picture, and it is well named 'The Man of Galilee.'" Then he went back, and looked again upon the face of the canvas, and with softened voice uttered these words: "O Man of Galilee, if there is anything I can do to help you in the work you are doing in the world, count on me. Count on me." May this be the response of our hearts, as we look up into the face of Christ! May we say to him as never before—"Count on me!"—John McDowell.

Are You Sharing the Kingdom Task? Really, now, how long is it since we tried to induce some one else to walk the Christian way? When did we speak or write a note with this in view? When was the last time we prayed that a certain person might be converted from the self-centered life and enter the Christ life?

Oh, yes, one's first reaction toward the idea is quite understandable: "I'm not built that way; it doesn't come as easily to me as it does to some persons. I try to live a decent and useful life; I am supporting the church and missions, but this business of approaching another person goes against my grain. At heart he may be as good as I and perhaps better. I don't like to interfere with another man's private affairs or invade his personality."

The person addressed will not be offended if without fuss or sanctimoniousness we say: "Come and live the Christian life with me. I make poor work of it at times, but I know that I possess an urge, a recourse, an ideal of priceless worth, and I know they all proceed from Christ. Won't you settle once for all the question of your personal attitude to him?"—The Congregationalist.

For Enlargement or Discussion.—1. Following Christ. See Quiet Talks on Following the Christ, by S. D. Gordon; Chapter IX of The Master's Way.

2. The great problem is not how to save the world, but how to persuade each Christian that it is his business to be the means of saving some one man in the world.—Dr. J. H. Parkhurst.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What are the great discourses which Matthew records? 2. What parallels to four of the Beatitudes can you find in 2 S. 22.26; Ps. 24.4; 37.11; Isa. 61.1? 3. What Christian graces do the Beatitudes proclaim? 4. What is it to be poor in spirit? 5. What is it to be meek? 6. What is it to be pure in heart? 7. What is the distinction between happiness and blessedness? 8. Are most people looking for the right kind of happiness? 9. The conviction has been growing during the World War that things would be different when it was over; that the Christian character would become more genuine: is this belief being realized?

WHAT THE KING REQUIRES

Golden Text

Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5.48

LESSON Matthew 5 and 6 DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 6.27-38

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Leviticus 19.18; Deuteronomy 6.4, 5; Luke 6.20-38

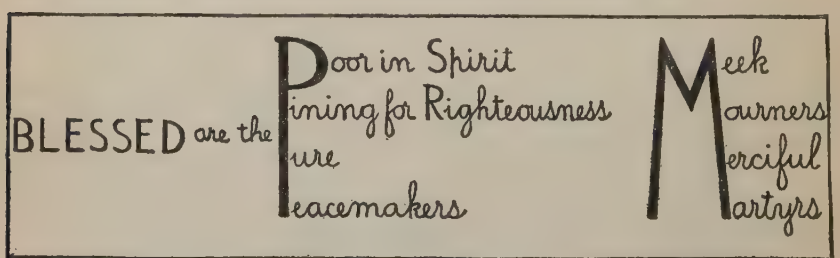
MATTHEW 5.1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: 2 and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.
10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

43 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: 44 but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you: 45 that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. 46 For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the Gentiles the same? 48 Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE SCENE, verses 1, 2. Jewish rabbis usually sat while teaching, and Jesus followed the custom. Surrounded by his disciples, the Twelve and also other followers, *he opened his mouth and taught them,* in Matthew's Hebraic statement, a solemn way of introducing words of great importance.

II. RECEIPTS FOR BLESSEDNESS, verses 3-10. *Blessed,* said Jesus. From *Beati,* Blessed, the word with which these verses begin in the Latin version, comes our term *Beatitudes.* Blessedness is higher than Happiness. Happiness may seem to depend upon circumstances: blessedness always depends upon relationship to God. "Blessedness," says Professor Stalker, "is a happiness pure and spiritual, reaching down to the profoundest elements of human nature and reaching forth to the illimitable developments of eternity." The Nupe people of Nigeria have a phrase for happiness which means blessedness—"to be sweet in-

side." "It was one of the great services that Robert Louis Stevenson rendered to his generation that he so attractively insisted on the ethical value of happiness. One of his friends declared that it touched every part of his experience, from physical pleasures up through the delights of intellectual and moral life to the most exalted spiritual joys; and its proclamation is a distinguishing feature of his life's work. Happiness, he proclaimed, was the spring of all worthy effort. The highest and purest and most abiding happiness man can experience is the recognition of an ideal which he has made his own, whose reality he has tested in experience, and to which he has learned to devote himself with complete conviction. Such a man is blessed because this is the Kingdom of Heaven. For the Kingdom of Heaven is such an ideal."

And who are blessed? *The poor in spirit,* said Jesus, for *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Poor in spirit is in no sense poor-spirited; rather is it the truest manliness. The poor in spirit are the humble-minded, who are conscious of their need of God. Luke's version gives only "Blessed are ye poor," and a writer in the Expository Times explains that the two statements are one and the same, for "the poor" was a recognized term among the Jews for those who had dedicated themselves to the service of God. They were, for the most part, literally poor in this world's goods, but they possessed God, and having him they had attained blessedness.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. See Heb. 12.11. "The word translated *comforted* implies *strengthening* as well as *consolation.* The faculty which is exercised by the true mourner is strengthened by use. Those who bear their sorrows patiently grow in patience; those who sorrow for others grow in sympathy; those who sorrow for their own sin deepen their penitence; those who intercede for the sins of the world grow in the likeness of the great Sin-bearer and Intercessor. The comfort comes from the exercise of the spiritual faculty, and from the consciousness of growing more like God; but there is also that final comfort in the world to come, when 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes'"(Dummelow).

Blessed are the meek. The meek are the self-controlled. The virtue of meekness is far from being a passive one. Only a strong person can be a truly meek person. The Greek word Πραεῖς, is the same one which in Xenophon's Anabasis is used for the taming of wild horses. A meek man is a tamed man, one who has himself in perfect control under all and every provocation. A meek man does not lack force and fire and power, but he controls these good qualities and uses them for right things. The Jews were looking forward to inheriting the earth in a literal sense; when the Messiah should come they expected their land to rule all lands. How strange it must have sounded to the disciples to hear Jesus proclaim that *the meek shall inherit the earth,* to hear such a reward promised to a virtue, not to a deed! But the inheritance here spoken of is spiritual rather than material. "Who owns the mountains?" questions Bishop McConnell. "The man who has a deed to the land? Rather, the man who appreciates the mountains. The saints own the earth in that they see the spiritual significance of life and are masters of life."

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. "I'm hungry all the time!" cried a growing boy, and his father remarked, "That's all right, provided you are hungry for the right things." The metaphor in this Beatitude means those that eagerly desire righteousness. "Hunger is a recurring manifestation of physical health. The invalid loses desire for food, but with returning health commences to desire and enjoy it. So it is also in the moral and spiritual realm. Hunger for the highest, for the best and truest life, is itself a sign of saving relationship with God. The man who has no hunger and is conscious of no needs has neither knowledge of himself nor of God"(Holden). They that hunger and thirst after righteousness *shall be filled.* A puny child was brought to a London hospital for treatment, and on his arrival the nurse gave him a glass of milk. Before lifting the glass to his lips, the little fellow asked anxiously, "How deep may I drink, Miss?" How much that question told of the poverty of a house where a glass had to be shared among many! How deep may we drink in our thirst after righteousness? We shall be filled with righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful, the compassionate; those whose hearts are touched by the tragedy of human misery and who do all in their part to alleviate it. "When England on behalf of outraged Belgium opposed the armed nation that

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had violated all the sanctities of the plighted word and acknowledged duty, was not that a splendid deed of mercy? Let none say that mercy is feeble. It is an attribute of God himself. The most heroic Soul that e'er wore flesh, because he was merciful, came into collision with priestcraft and vested interest, and the end of it was death by violence."(Bernard J. Snell). *For they shall obtain mercy.* This recalls the later word of Jesus: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. If you give mercy, you shall receive mercy, from your fellow men in a measure and from God in abundance.

Blessed are the pure in heart. The pure in heart are the true, those whom every kind of goodness attracts. "Purity stands for perfect righteousness of character, for life lived by the impulse of unsullied motives, and crowned with the service of unstained deeds. It is not *a* virtue; it is *all* the virtues"(Ainsworth). As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, and thoughts that are pure, sincere, guileless, lead to acts that are upright, true, Christ-like. "The pure in heart are the simple-thoughted, the clear-purposed, the straight-forward, in one word, the guileless"(Boardman). *For they shall see God.* Only the pure in heart have the capacity for seeing God. To the hardened sinner, to the indifferent, or to the heedless, God cannot reveal himself, for they cannot grasp divine revelation. The secret of the Lord is only with them that fear him.

"'I do not see thee, God!' a soul made plaint;
'O for an angel hand to tear the veil apart;
Hide not from me thy face, I strive, I faint!'
The silence whispered, 'Art thou pure in heart?'"

Blessed are the peacemakers. Not merely the *peaceable men,* as Wycliffe translates, but the *maintainers of peace,* as in Tyndale's Version. A Frenchwoman announces herself as an *artiste stoppeur.* She is nothing more nor less than an artist at stopping holes—one who darns and patches in the most approved way. Peacemakers are artists in stopping all things that disturb the peace, whether like Isaac of old who prevented friction by quietly moving on and digging new wells, or like the statesmen at this writing engaged in trying to form a lasting League of Peace among nations.

"Thrice blessed are they who make strife cease,
And all their lives are making peace."

"Everyone who follows Christ is by profession a peacemaker"(Bishop Brent). "The world is hungry today for peacemakers of great stature. Never were they so needed. The pattern Peacemaker is Christ. Only in and through him the peace of nations is possible. A truly Christian peace among Christian nations —what a marvelous and beautiful thing it would be! And it is to be. It is in God's purpose and is awaiting man's will"(Bishop Brent). *For they shall be called sons of God.* Put side by side with this the words spoken of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and the words of Paul (Rom. 8.14), "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they who undaunted by threat or peril endure to the end, for righteousness' sake. "The cause, not the pain, makes the martyr"(Augustine).

III. LOVE A UNIVERSAL DEBT, verses 43-47. *Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.* Leviticus 19.18 contains the former saying, and the latter was added by the Jewish expounders of the law (for which Deuteronomy 23.6 may have been the excuse); for they held that an enemy was not a neighbor, that Gentiles were enemies, and that only Israelites should be loved. It is a natural tendency of mankind to hate an enemy, but Jesus declared his law to be *Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.* This you must do if you would be *sons of your Father who is in heaven,* like him in bestowing good on all alike: *for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil as well as the good, and he sendeth his rain on the unjust as well as on the just.* Love given for love is only a glorified selfishness. Even the publicans (the tax collectors appointed by the Roman government and classed by the Jews with heathen and harlots, robbers and murderers, because they were wont to use their power to extort more than the law required) love those who love them. *What reward* (what thanks, Lk. 6.32) have ye? *What do ye more than others, if ye salute your brethren only, do not even the Gentiles the same?* When Saul was pursuing David that he might kill him, David spared Saul's

life when he had Saul in his power in the cave at En-gedi, and Saul said to David, "Thou are more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil." This is just what Jesus told his disciples, that the Davids must be more righteous than the Sauls; they must love their enemies.

In this matter of love you must imitate God; *ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Perfect* means *complete.* Do not merely perform some duties, such as prayer and almsgiving, and neglect other duties, such as charity in judgment and kindness to enemies: omit none, even as God omits none. "The Savior, I suppose," said Abraham Lincoln, "did not expect that any human being would be perfect as the Father in heaven; but he set this up as a standard, and he who did most toward reaching that standard attained the highest degree of moral perfection." "Until a man knows Jesus Christ, he has little chance of even guessing the grandeurs of which he himself is capable."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, verse 3. Contrast with this virtue the rabbinical parallel cited in the One Volume Commentary: "Even be more and more lowly in spirit, since the expectancy of men is to become the food of worms!"

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions upon the Lesson. Which one of the Beatitudes is recalled by Jesus' word, "Man shall not live by bread alone"? How has Jesus shown himself humble in one of our lessons? What have we been told about his sympathy? About his mercifulness? How did David show love toward an enemy?

The Gospel of the Kingdom. Matthew follows the call of the disciples with Jesus' "Ordination Address" to them, to which Augustine was the first to give the title of "The Sermon on the Mount," a title which came into general use by the time of the Reformation. A better one has been suggested in recent years, that of "The Gospel of the Kingdom," for it treats first of the character the King wishes the members of the Kingdom to possess; second, of the influence of members upon the world; third, it gives an interpretation of the Law; fourth, it declares the works of righteousness; fifth, the need of singleness of service; sixth, a prophecy of the Church in the world; and seventh, a test of true discipleship.

The Beatitudes are the opening sentences of the Kingdom Address.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

When or where the Beatitudes were spoken it is not possible to say. The place may have been Mount Tabor, or any of the hills near the Sea of Galilee. Tradition says it was Kurn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin, about five miles west of the lake, to which therefore has been given the name of "The Mount of Beatitudes."

Assign paragraphs 51.10-13, 42-44 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A six-year-old boy was learning his Sunday-school lesson at home. The subject was the Sermon on the Mount. "You must love your enemies," repeated his mother; "the people you don't like, you must love." "O, now, mother, that's just bosh!" exclaimed the boy. Of course it was bosh to him. All great fundamental truths of life seem folly to the child. Had the mother repeated, "The world is round," the boy would just as naturally have called that bosh, for didn't he himself see that it was flat? "Here is the task of the grown-up in all ages," comments a writer; "to open the child's eyes to see that all these ideas, impossible and absurd to childhood, are yet profoundly true—the truest things in the world." The revelation comes gradually, and usually through concrete examples.

There is so much in this lesson that it may be well in all classes below the Young People's to limit your lesson to the Beatitudes. If you can plant in their minds the thought that their happiness depends not so much upon what

they have or what they do as upon what they are, you will do much toward making happy their whole after lives.

In adult classes love of Germany will naturally come up for discussion. Plant this thought, that to love an enemy is to seek his best welfare, and that it was necessary for Germany's best welfare that she should be taught that whatsoever she sowed that she had to reap.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: WHAT JESUS WISHES HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE

Optional Topic: Healing a Nobleman's Son. Lesson Material, John 4.46-53. Memory Verse, John 4.50b. In some denominations this miracle of healing has been chosen instead of the lesson upon the Beatitudes. Teachers are referred to the treatment of the lesson for November 14th, Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant, which is exactly similar in its lesson truths.

Every Junior is expected to know the Beatitudes "by heart." Should he not understand them? To understand them in all their fulness is beyond a Junior's grasp, but to get an understanding true as far as it goes is most essential for him.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "I have been committing to memory some verses in the Bible, and I have come to recite them to you"; thus spoke a Korean Christian. He had walked one hundred miles to recite these verses to the missionary, and he would have to walk all the way back again. Without a single mistake he recited the entire Sermon on the Mount. How many chapters in Matthew's Gospel? How many verses? How many of them can you recite?

The missionary told the Korean that it was not enough to learn the Sermon by heart, he must practice it. "That is the way I learned it," he exclaimed eagerly. "I tried to memorize it, but it wouldn't stick, so I hit on this plan: I memorized a verse, and then I found a heathen neighbor of mine, and practiced the verse on him. Then I found it would stick." Shall we not do the same?

What Jesus Wishes His Followers to Be. Had one of us been asked to write out a list of the qualities we look for in ideal people, I am quite sure we should have written something far different from these Beatitudes. We do not fancy poverty; we don't enjoy mourning; we do not wish to be meek.

Well, let us look at the rest of these qualities first. We like to have others play fair, don't we? That's righteousness. And we don't feel attracted to people that carry a grudge! Then we believe in being merciful, at least when we talk of what others ought to be. We do not really think highly of boys and girls that have a dirty tongue. Then our best selves prefer purity. Quarrellers are the last persons we care to have anything to do with. So, we say, "Blessed are the peacemakers." When we see anyone stand up for his convictions, no matter how much it costs him, then we feel like shaking hands with him. There's where we join in with the "persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Now what of the earlier ones? Do you like a conceited boy or girl, one who is always bragging? Of course, you don't; you prefer meekness, after all.

Queen Victoria once gave one of her daughters a lesson in meekness. The little girl had been carried on board the royal yacht by a sailor who said to her as he put her down, "There you are, my little lady." The child did not like being carried, and she shook herself and said, "I'm not a little lady; I'm a princess." Her mother said quietly, "You would better tell the kind sailor who carried you that you are not a little lady yet, though you hope to be one some day."

Do you admire a boy or girl that has done wrong and feels happy over it? You think he should feel sorry for doing you ill. That's what Jesus has in mind when he speaks of those who mourn.

There is just one quality left of which we do not feel sure: the poor in spirit. Let us think for just a moment. If we see a child dressed in ragged clothes, we say that he is poor in clothes. If he doesn't know how to read, we say, "Poor child, he is poor in education." Now whom do you suppose Jesus means by "poor in spirit"? He means one who feels how much he needs God. One who is poor in spirit wants to become richer, at least, if he knows that he needs to be. The only way to grow stronger and better in every way is to feel

poor in spirit. Else we stay just where we are, or even go backward. Blessed are the poor in spirit; the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Now let us repeat the Beatitudes in a little different words, which bring out their meaning:—

"Happy are they who feel the need of God's help; for God is in their hearts.

"Happy are they who regret their sins and shortcomings; for God will forgive their sins and comfort them.

"Happy are they who are willing to let others have first place; for God will take care that they shall have greatest power.

"Happy are they who earnestly pray and live for the right; for God will fill them with His own righteousness.

"Happy are they who are kind and forgiving toward others; for they have favor with God and with men.

"Happy are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

"Happy are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

"Happy are they who are troubled by others because they do right; for God is in their hearts.

"Happy are you when others speak bitterly against you and trouble you and tell lies about you, because you serve me."—Based upon Scripture Memory Work, by Gerrit Verkuyl.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse, Mt. 5.8.

The blessed are they who but live to bless.—Lucy Larcom.

We must fight against selfishness if we would win blessedness.—Wm. George Jordan.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Of what two ways does Jesus speak? 2. How do they differ? 3. How shall we know the true from the false followers of Jesus? 4. Why did Jesus ask the question of verse 16? 5. What is a corrupt tree? 6. What happens to a corrupt tree? 7. What evil which may be likened to "a corrupt tree" do we always think about on the fifth Sunday of the last Quarter?

Note-Book Work. IV. The Lesson Title; the Beatitudes written from memory with an explanatory sentence after each one; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: CHRIST'S STANDARD FOR LIVING Or, MEASURING UP TO CHRIST'S STANDARD

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "Follow me," said Jesus to his disciples, "and I will make you." When Jesus is given the opportunity to make a character, he changes it. "Uncle Mose," said a commercial traveler in a country store, expecting to make some amusement for the crowd, "they tell me you remember seeing George Washington." "No, sah," was the unexpected reply, "I uster remember seeing him, but I done forget it since a year, since I became a Christian." The one who follows the Master becomes truthful, for lying has no place in Christ's standard for living. You remember how Jesus looked one day into the very soul of Peter the fickle, and said to him, I call you Peter, the Rock, the steadfast, immovable, dependable man. And this was eventually the character which Jesus made of Peter. There are certain qualities which Jesus expects his followers to acquire. Let us consider them one by one. (See the Lesson Text Explained.)

Happiness is Within. I saw 7,150 silver dollars, placed in a Broadway window for advertising purposes. It was most interesting for two reasons. First, one does not often see such a pile of silver money; there was something of unusualness about it. The second feature of interest was lent by the faces centering about that window. They did not say a word, yet those staring countenances were a kind of talking pantomime. The newsboy hushed his raucous call of "Uxtra!" for a moment, smacked his lips, and said: "Oh, if I could just get my hands into that pile!" The messenger boy paused on his way; his eyes flashed; his lips twitched: "Ah, if I only had it all myself!" The clerk, returning to the office from his luncheon, stopped, looked, and then turned away, saying: "Never mind! I'll have that, and more, too, one of these days!" Just then, a fine-looking, venerable gentleman joined the crowd. He was coming up from his Wall Street office. The day was warm and fragrant, one of the season's prophecies of apple blossoms and soft green grass and warbling birds. He

had telephoned his chauffeur not to come down that afternoon. He said: "I won't need the automobile today; I'll just walk a bit for exercise." I noticed that he gave but a single glance at the money. For forty years he had washed his hands in rivers of silver and streams of gold; what were 7,150 silver dollars to him? At once he looked at the faces of the newsboy, the messenger, and the clerk. And then the old man's face began to talk. This is what he said: "Boys, you are all pathetically mistaken. Happiness is not concealed in that glinting pile there. I used to think so, but I have learned better."

Blessed is the man who has learned better! His feet are already set in the dewy paths of peace. For our lasting fortunes and imperishable worths are all within.—Frederick F. Shannon, in The Breath in the Winds.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on Bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in making muckle mair;
It's no in books; it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest;
If Happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest.—Burns.

The Happiest One in the World. The famous Italian poet Torquato Tasso was once asked who was the happiest one in the world. After a few minutes' thought, he replied, "God." His questioner had not expected this reply, and he pursued his inquiry further. "Next to God, who is the happiest?" he asked. And the poet replied, "He who is nearest to God."

Let Us Measure up to Christ's Standard. A little group of boys were spending the summer in France. A visitor saw these English schoolboys and overheard their conversation as to what they should do on Sunday. Some of the boys were proposing a certain course of action, and all seemed to agree until one fellow spoke up and said: "No, I do not agree. I will not do it." And when the other lads urged him to come along he still insisted that he would not. They asked him his reasons. He said: "Well, Thring would not like it, and what Thring would not like I do not intend to do." "Well, but Thring isn't here," they said; "he's back in Uppingham." "I do not care," said the boy; "Thring would not like it." He believed that he was living in a real sense—I mean in the most real sense of all, in the life of his personal will—before the standards of his master, and by those standards as in the light of his master's countenance he insisted that he would uncompromisingly live.

Before the eyes of God a man will beware how he lives his life. If he knows that this life of his can find no darkness where he can hide himself from God, if he knows that all of his days are to be spent before his face, that all his deeds are to be done beneath the gaze of God, assuredly that will govern and control a man's decisions about his practical ways. The consciousness of a living God will give direction to a man's moral life.—Robert E. Speer, in The Stuff of Manhood.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Instead of trying so hard, as some of us do, to be happy, as if that were the sole purpose of life, I would, if I were a boy again, try still harder to deserve happiness.—James T. Fields.

In the day of final reckoning between God and one's own soul, there will be only one standard by which to measure life, and that will be, "How much has the Gospel of Jesus Christ enabled us to become and to accomplish?"—Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are the first three Gospels called the Synoptic Gospels? 2. What does *Synoptic* mean? 3. What does the figure of speech in verse 15 mean? 4. Who before Jesus had given the warning of verse 19? (Mt. 3.10.) 5. What makes one a member of the Kingdom of Heaven? (Verse 21.) 6. Point out five striking contrasts in the lesson text. 7. How can you tell whether or not you are a Christian? 8. Commit to memory the entire lesson. 9. What are some corrupt trees that await the ax? 10. If it was necessary to keep liquor out of our camps during the war, is it not just as necessary to keep it out of our communities now?

Note-Book Work. IV. The Beatitudes and Their Lessons.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: CITIZENSHIP IN THE NEW KINGDOM: CHARACTER Or, THE CHARACTER WHICH JESUS REQUIRES

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. During the Great War, on the day of the Chinese New Year Festival, the Chinese at the front presented the Y. M. C. A. leaders silk banners bearing the inscription, "To the Honorable Officer of the Blessed Way." Upon the tables of the Y. M. C. A. huts they placed hundreds of small red-paper triangles, bearing the Chinese word for "Happiness." "Those Chinese had learned that the religion of Jesus Christ is the Blessed Way that brings happiness. What a new hope for China comes when we know that the religion of Jesus Christ is rightly interpreted by them!" said one of the workers. The Religion of the Blessed Way; is not that a beautiful name for the New Kingdom? We are to discuss today what is the character which Jesus requires of citizens of the Blessed Way.

It is a Matter of First Importance to the Christian to Get the Point of View of Jesus. The right development of Christian character is dependent in a large measure upon this all-important thing. Jesus was constantly running counter to the popular judgments of his day, and it is true in this day that much of his teaching seems to many people wholly impracticable.

One day Jesus said a strange word about meekness—a quality of mind and heart that was not exactly an epidemic at that time. The people looked on with wonderment when he declared, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." They probably said it was an absurd statement, and one having the wisdom that Jesus claimed to possess should not have made it. To whom do the prizes belong? To those who secure them, whether they are worthy of them or otherwise. Ask the question on the street, in the busy turmoil of life, and the answer will be, what? To the meek? Not at all. To the strong, the cunning, the crafty—these are they who will inherit all things. Thus speaks the world. But the world is wrong, as it always has been. And Christ is right—right because he gave utterance in that sentence of his to one of the deep, fundamental principles of all existence—the meek inherit all things, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Who acquires knowledge in school? The pupil who is proud and is sure of himself, who thinks that he knows as much as his instructors; or the one who with openness of mind is willing to be taught? Who makes headway in scientific research, the one who makes bold assertions and will not budge from them, or the one who is willing to sit at the feet of nature and be taught of her? To ask these questions is to answer them. The greater the spirit of real and genuine meeknesss, all other things being equal, the greater the prizes that await man.

But Christ spoke spiritually when he gave utterance to these words. And how true they are! That which they convey to us is that out of a willingness to learn of him who is meek and lowly of heart there comes real spiritual power. We inherit power to resist temptation, power to overcome evil, power to grow in grace, and the final "power of the resurrection."—Editorial in The Christian Advocate.

The Value of the Highest Ideals. The religious books of ancient Persia say that when the soul of a good man arrives at the river of death a beautiful radiant figure meets it and says to it: "I am your true self, your best self, your real self. I am the image of your ideals, your strivings, your resolves, your determined purposes. I am you. Henceforth we merge together into one harmonious life." "The parable is a genuine one," says Rufus M. Jones, in The World Within. "We are forever what our ideals make us." Let us make nothing less than perfection our ideal: Ye therefore shall be perfect, declared Jesus, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

A Common Mistake. The mistake of the Christian world is that men expect to have the Beatitudes without fulfilling the conditions attached to them. How often do we pray we may have the Kingdom of Heaven without thinking that we must first be poor in spirit! How often do we pray for mercy without first seeking to be merciful! How often do we expect to be filled because we hunger and thirst, when we have never made sure that what we hunger and thirst for is real righteousness!—Henry Drummond.

Blesssed are They that Mourn. Greatly as I admire the essays of Ralph

Waldo Emerson, I cannot believe that his philosophy is an absolutely complete one. Often he seems to ignore certain important facts of suffering, sin and sorrow. He lived serenely in his Concord home, surrounded by his neighbors and often visited by his countless friends. The terrors of selfishness and horrors of sin, somehow, do not seem to have been entirely sensed by this good old man, who lived so apart from them.

Thomas Carlyle's philosophy was not as satisfactory as Emerson's. Carlyle saw all the sufferings of life. He keenly realized its defeats and was very conscious of its pains, but he seldom saw any victorious outcome. He taught that men must be brave, but the end of the journey was the grave.

But Robert Browning had a better philosophy of life than either of these two. Browning knew the evil and the failure; but he faced them, wrestled with them, and won a signal victory. Browning does not ignore the evil, he does not get trapped and tangled in it, as Carlyle has sometimes done; but with a mighty faith in God's goodness and the ultimate triumph, he goes abroad, seeking to depict in his poems the badness of life, not to keep it such, but that he may do valiant battle with it. Would you find happiness, adopt Browning's philosophy. There is suffering, there is sorrow, there is sin; but you cannot find contentment by simply turning your back upon them. They must be faced, understood, conquered! Facts have a way of chasing you and catching up with you. They are good runners and you had better reckon with them now.

You are to go hence, bye and bye; ignoring that fact will not add to your happiness. You are to live every day conscious of the fact that this life is not all.

You cannot have a perfect picture without shadows. Music needs the minor as well as major chords. Frost and storm are necessary for a complete harvest. The man who knows nothing of poverty can hardly appreciate the feelings of the poor nor find in himself a ready sympathy.

To understand our own lives we must face the facts—the sorrows and the joys, the weakness and the strength. To understand the incomparable life of Jesus, all its facts must be considered. The man who ignores Gethsemane does not understand Olivet. The student who goes sympathetically with him through the Valley and does not follow him out from it, fails signally.—A. Eugene Bartlett, in The Joy Maker.

Can We Love Our Enemies? Love those who injure us, maltreat us, misrepresent our motives, distort our words, vilify our good name, destroy our happiness, glory in our shame, and then rejoice in our suffering? Love them? How can we do it? It seems absurd. What can Christ mean? Does he imagine that love can be commanded at will?

First, let us get at the real meaning of the two words Christ used. There are two words, with distinctly different meanings in the Greek New Testament that are translated by our English word "love." The one means the love of affection or fondness, which springs spontaneous, unbidden in the heart; the love of the parent for the child, of the husband for the wife, or the friend for the friend. This is the love of the emotions. The other means a love that can be chosen and cultivated. It consists, not in affection or fondness, but in deliberate kindly action, loyalty in service, and a desire for the good of others even when they are opposed or unfriendly to us. It is not an unbidden emotion of the heart, but a deliberate direction of the will. It is this second word that Christ uses when he says, "Love your enemies." "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Above all, refrain from revenge and work for his good.

"It is impossible," you say. Oh, no! It is exceedingly difficult in most cases, but not impossible, for he who commands us to do it gives the grace and power to accomplish it.

Sir Walter Scott has given a striking illustration of the Christian love which casts out revenge in his story of Elizabeth McClure, in "Old Mortality." She tells young Morton what she did for the fugitive soldier who came to her cottage after the Battle of Drumclog. "He stopped at this puir cottage, stiff and bloody wi' wounds, pale and dune out wi' riding, and his horse sae weary he couldna drag ane feet after the tother, and his foes were close ahint him, and he was ane o' our enemies. But I fed him, and relieved him, and keepit him hidden till the pursuit was ower..... I gat ill-will about it amang some o' our ain folk. They said I should hae been to him what Jael was to Sisera. But weel I wot

I had nae divine command to shed blood, and to save it was baith like a woman and a Christian. And then they said I wanted natural affection, to relieve ane that belanged to the band that murdered my twa sons. The tane fell wi' sword in hand, fightin' for a broken National Covenant; the tother—O they took him and shot him dead on the green before his mither's face! My auld e'en dazzled when the shots were looted off, and, to my thought, they waxed weaker and weaker ever since that weary day; and sorrow, and heartbreak, and tears that would not be dried might help on the disorder." That was what Christ meant by "loving one's enemies." That splendid old woman's heart was hot against her enemies; she prayed for their overthrow, but the battle was over, and she held no spirit of revenge. She remembered the Scripture. "Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord."

But there is yet another distinction to be made. It is a distinction that Christ himself made clear in his words and actions all through his life. When he commands us to love our enemies and pray for those that persecute us, he is speaking of our private and personal enemies.

But public outrage is a different thing. Injury to others calls for different action. When justice or truth is assailed, when innocence is outraged, when weakness is tortured and helplessness trampled under the hoofs of brutality, then love blazes into wrath and righteousness leaps to smite in their defence—then it becomes the imperative duty, not only of manhood, but of religion, to resist and put down the iniquity with every available weapon.

The Germans are not my individual, personal enemies, but they are the enemies of humanity and enemies of God. Till Germany is finally conquered in her brutal desire to trample the nations under her feet, the only love that we can show her is the love of righteousness expressed in the thunder of the guns and the flash of the bayonet. For Christ is, first, King of Righteousness, and then King of Peace, and there is no forgiveness, even in God, for the man or nation that does not repent of sins.

But let Germany repent of her many crimes against humanity; let her clothe herself in sackcloth and ashes and get down in the dust of humiliation at the feet of the Christ; let her make restitution to the umost of her power to the nations she has robbed and wounded and desolated; let her cast out for ever her false gods of militarism and lust of power; let her pledge her soul to live at peace with the nations of the earth, small and great—and, then, we will lay down the sword at the feet of God, and beseech him for grace to forgive and power to love even the enemy who has broken our hearts and shadowed our homes with a grief unparalleled in the history of our race.—Condensed from a Sermon by A. E. Cook.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The moral ideals of the Jews in the time of Christ.

2. The duty, sources, secret, art and grades of happiness. See Happiness by Hugh Black; The Heart of Happiness, by Percy C. Ainsworth.

3. How Jesus Christ changed men's thoughts about goodness. See Chapter V of Five Young Men, by Dr. Charles R. Brown; Chapter VII of Christianity and Social Problems, by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

4. Ye have heard it said....but I say unto you.

New Occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of Truth.—Lowell.

5. Is the Golden Rule Workable among Nations? See a pamphlet with this title by Dr. Ernest DeWitt Burton. (Three cents each, American Institute of Sacred Literature, Hyde Park, Chicago.)

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are the first three Gospels called the Synoptic Gospels? 2. What does Synoptic mean? 3. Why is the right path called *straightened?* 4. Explain the figure of speech in verse 15: are there such people today? 5. Can those whom the Lord does "not know," do mighty works in his name? 6. What does the parable of the Two Foundations teach? 7. What is "the rock" on which true character is built? (1 Cor. 10.4.) 8. What are some glaring evils today that need to be "hewn down"? 9. What is our church doing about them? 10. Have we a responsibility in the matter? 11. What is the status of prohibition in Europe? 12. In Africa? 13. In South America? 14. In Asia?

HEW DOWN THE CORRUPT TREE—WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

Golden Text

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Matthew 7.19

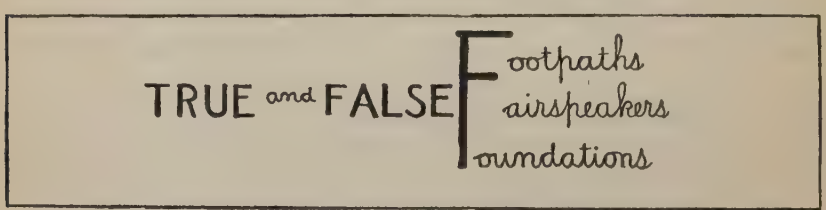
LESSON Matthew 7.13-29. DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 3.1-12

MATTHEW 7.15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. 16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: 25 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. 26 And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: 27 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. THE TWO GATES AND THE TWO WAYS, verses 13, 14.

II. FALSE TEACHERS, verse 15. *Beware of false prophets* who lead others away from the narrow way, Jesus warns. Prophets were not so much those who *foretold* as those who *forthtold,* they are comparable to modern preachers. Every age has had teachers who have spoken falsely in the name of God. *They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.* The lamb or sheep was a symbol of innocence; the wolf, of evil; these men come disguised as honest teachers, but in reality they are rapacious workers of evil. "I do not think there are many preachers of this type today. But there are books and dramas in plenty. I know a man who drifted into agnosticism, and in giving an account of his blunder afterwards said, 'My favorite authors betrayed me with a kiss.' If the conversation of a man makes us careless and cynical, if prayer as a result is more distasteful and goodness less winsome; if a drama makes us lose the bloom of our personal piety; if the reading of a great author saps our faith and tarnishes our reverence for goodness—we are on the wrong track. The doctrine that makes me less of a man is the product of a false prophet" (Phillips).

III. HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE FALSE AND THE TRUE, verses 16-20. *By their fruits,* by their life, *ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so,* just as we gather fruit only from the tree which bears it, *every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt,* unsound, *tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* "By no alchemy can we get golden conduct out of leaden motives" (Spencer). *Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

IV. TRUE AND FALSE DISCIPLES, verses 21-23. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.* The emphatic word here is *saith,* for the contrast is between saying, claiming Jesus as Lord, and doing, obeying the word of God. *Many will say to me in that day,* the Day of Judgment, *Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?* The New Testament use of the word *prophesy* is that of speaking under divine inspiration, whether in regard to things past, present or future. "Can a doer of good works be unworthy? A man's real character will show in his life; but single acts, or even a considerable number of acts, do not necessarily indicate his real character. There would seem to be the two sides of truth which Jesus was teaching in these verses. A bad man cannot conceal his true character, even from his fellow-men, in the long run. But a bad man may do good deeds, and he may even presumptuously do good in the name of Jesus Christ. A corrupt tree may bear good fruit without ever growing it."

"Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will!" (Longfellow.)

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you as my disciples: *depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* This is a clear claim that Jesus the Christ will be the Judge on that day.

V. THE TWO FOUNDATIONS, verses 24-27. Since doing the will of God, not saying Lord, Lord, avails, *Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine and doeth them, shall be likened* in a parable unto the wise and foolish builders, one of whom built *upon the rock* and one *upon the sand.* The rock-founded house withstood the storms; the sand-founded house collapsed. The former is the character built upon Christ, upon faith in him which results in obedience to him.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire, verse 19. It is worthy of note that in Western Asia no tree is planted or even allowed to grow, unless its fruit commends it to the care of man. Fuel being scarce, all other trees are cut down: the poplar alone may be excepted, whose tall trunk is needed for house-building.—Van Lennep.

Ancient Egyptian Axes

A wise man who built his house upon the rock, verse 24. In the hill country the houses are all built of heavy masonry. As no wood is ever used in the building of walls, roofs, or floors, it becomes necessary to have thick walls, set on solid foundations of rock, and the walls are often from two to five feet in thickness, the ceiling or roof being vaulted. Very often it is necessary to dig from twenty to fifty feet in the ground until the bed of rock is reached, especially when upper stories are built. In towns or villages of the plains where rocks and stones are scarce, the houses are built of bricks made of sun dried clay or mud, and often in these regions, where the periodical rains are very heavy and long continued, the mud houses collapse from the rain.—Gamahliel Wad-el-Ward, in Palestine Through the Eyes of a Native.

And the rain descended and the floods came, verse 27. In all Western Asia the rains, though comparatively infrequent, are copious and heavy while they last. The uneven and often abrupt surface of the country, presenting steep mountain heights and deep valleys, occasions, during a storm, the rapid gathering of waters to a single point, so that mighty torrents suddenly appear rushing along through gorges where not a drop of water trickled a moment before. These pour down with terrible force, often tearing away rocks and trees, and

sweeping all before them. Houses erected near their track are in imminent danger of being carried away by the angry floods. Should there be any weakness in their foundation, the rushing waters soon work their way beneath, and, undermining the building, bear it away bodily.—Van Lennep.

The Arabs say that wadies in time of flood are "not rivers, but seas."

When people in these regions speak of the strength of a house, it is not by affirming that "It will last so many years," but that "It will withstand the rains: it will not be injured by the floods." Only the house founded upon a rock can withstand the rains and floods of a wet season.—Roberts, Oriental Illustrations.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Close of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount begins with *Blessed* and ends with *Beware*. You have heard the conditions of entering the Kingdom, the characteristics of its members, now obey the rules, says Christ in effect in his closing words which we study today. Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

While our nation has prohibited the making and sale of intoxicating liquors, it is highly important that the rising generation should have rooted convictions as to the wisdom of this recent action on our part, and as to their responsibility for a world freed from the curse of drunkenness.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: A SHARP AX FOR A CORRUPT TREE

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Of what is a sheep or a lamb a symbol? (Innocence.) Of what is a wolf a symbol? When Jesus warned his disciples against false teachers, how did he describe them? Although they looked as innocent as lambs, there was one test which always found them out: what was it? By their fruits ye shall know them: what does this mean? Jesus explained it by the question: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

"What an absurd question it seems," says the Rev. J. D. Jones in The Game of Life. "Of course men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles! All people for the most part get from thorns are scratches; and as for thistles, they seem to serve no purpose except to worry the heart of the poor farmer in whose fields they spring up! And yet Jesus Christ seems to hint that there were people expecting this absurd and impossible thing, expecting to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. That is to say, there were people who thought they could *be* one thing and *do* the other. And, indeed, for the matter of that, I think there are such people alive still.

"A man once came to Opie, the great painter. He was a painter of a sort himself, but lazy and shiftless. And yet he envied Opie his success; he thought it was all some sort of little trick of mixing colors, and if he only knew the trick he could paint as well as Opie himself. So he came to Opie one day and said to him, 'With what do you mix your paints, Mr. Opie?' And the painter, knowing the lazy man with whom he had to do, answered in a voice of thunder, 'With brains, sir.' That poor fellow was looking for figs from thistles, the fruit of success to grow on the tree of idleness. Opie told him that the fruit of success was only to be plucked from the tree of honest work.

"So I might go on illustrating. You never gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, and you never gather love from the tree of selfishness, or success from the tree of laziness, or brave deeds from the tree of cowardice. It is only unselfishness that wins affection, it is only toil that achieves success, it is only the courageous heart that does brave deeds."—Condensed from The Game of Life, by J. D. Jones.

A Sharp Ax for a Corrupt Tree. The corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. What is a corrupt thing? Something that is rotten, poisonous, utterly bad. Most things have at least a little good in them, but Jesus says there are some things which have not. How may we know whether an evil thing is a good thing gone wrong or a thing that is bad from root to twig? By its fruit, the evil which it does. Take a bad habit like the drink habit, as we call it. The doctors, the police courts, the hospitals, say it does nothing but harm.

Then that is a corrupt tree. Take envy, jealousy, bad temper: what good do they do? Again, none. They bring forth wrong and misery, and often lead to crime. Then they are corrupt things. They cannot bring forth good fruit.

What are we to do with corrupt things? Let them alone, try to improve them, build fences about them so that they cannot do much evil? All these things have been tried and are still being tried. But Jesus gives a different method. He says, Get rid of them, exterminate them, hew them down and fling them into the fire,—that is all they are fit for, to make a bonfire. The gentle Christ can be very stern when dealing with the thing that is utterly bad.

With what is this to be done? Jesus says the corrupt tree is to be hewn down, and this suggests the ax. A shining steel ax is not much use against the drink habit. Carrie Nation tried that long ago. She went about with a hatchet and attempted to destroy saloons, but she only succeeded in getting into trouble herself. Another ax, the legislative ax, has been used with success in our country. Our Congress passed a law that no intoxicating liquor could be manufactured or sold in the United States if the States agreed, and then our State Senators and Representatives approved, and this good ax has closed all the saloons in our land.

Let me be True. Once upon a time there was an ass who got into a lion's skin, and, for a time, all the other beasts thought that he was really a lion. But as soon as he began to bray they knew him for an ass, for his voice betrayed him.

Once upon a time there was a wolf who dressed himself in a sheep's skin, and so got into the fold as one of the flock. The next day the shepherd having occasion to choose one of the animals to be killed for food, chose the wolf, believing him to be a sheep. He soon, however, discovered his mistake, and hanged the wolf on a tree.

These are two very old stories, but they teach us the uselessness and the folly of pretending to be that which we are not, for we are sure to be found out, sooner or later.—Grace Winter.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Matthew 7.18, 19.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.—Proverbs 20.11.

"Saying and doing, we stand on the rock,
Saying, not doing, we stand on the sand.
Both shall be tried by the storm and the shock,
Only the rock the trial will stand."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer refer to God? 2. How many to ourselves. 3. When we pray, how may we think of God? 4. Why do we say, "who art in heaven"? 5. What does it mean to "hallow God's name"? 6. If we truly pray "Thy Kingdom come," what more must we do besides pray for its coming? 7. Can we rightly ask God to forgive us if we are unwilling to forgive those who wrong us?

Note-Book Work. V. The Lesson Title; what Jesus said about the test of a good tree; what he said about hewing down a corrupt tree; some things that may be compared to corrupt trees; two statements about what should be done to the evil of intemperance; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: EVIL FRUITS OF CORRUPT TREES

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Who is Harry Lauder? Have you ever heard him sing? During the War Harry Lauder gave his time and talents to help cheer the soldiers in the camps of France. In one camp the officers had some special Scotch whiskey for dinner, thinking it would please this brave Scotchman. But when he was asked what he would have, much to their surprise he answered, "Pass me the cauld water; that's the best drink for a man who has work to do." "Cauld water" was best for Harry Lauder and the soldiers; and because it is best for everyone in our country and Canada, "cauld water" is what we are getting. What special Sunday is this? Does our text say anything about drinking? What does it say should be done to any evil?

What the Advocates of Intoxicating Liquors are Doing. My Master does not say, "Do men *expect* to gather grapes from thorns?" for he knew well

that, strange as it seems, that is exactly what thousands do expect. His question is, "Do they ever succeed in finding them?" The thorn-bushes of dishonesty, treachery, drinking, self-indulgent vice, and other sorts, are planted thick in their life-field; and they calculate confidently on seeing sweet fruit hanging on them ere long. They do not call them thorns. They give them some other and finer names, which hide their real character. In the new catalogues of moral horticulturists the plants are vaunted as not being the old hurtful sorts, but shrubs entirely different.—G. H. Knight, in The Master's Questions to the Disciples.

Liquor and Efficiency. You all know Richmond P. Hobson as the man who ran an old collier, manned with volunteers, under the guns of Santiago and sank her to bottle up the Spanish fleet. He declares that when you consider efficiency there is no such thing as temperate drinking. And he proves it by giving "a bill of particulars."

"The Swedish government investigated drink as regards efficiency in its army. A test was held. A squad of Swedish infantrymen were sent on the range for rifle practice. Out of a hundred shots they made thirty perfect hits. Then each marksman received a quart of light beer, which he drank leisurely. A half hour later, the same marksmen were called upon to shoot again. All the men felt refreshed from the beer. They were confident of making a better record. This time they made only four hits out of a hundred shots. That day, that squad of riflemen shot liquor out of the Swedish army. Also, it is being shot out of all the armies in the world, slowly but surely. And for one purpose: efficiency.

"Japan prohibits liquor in her army and navy. When Admiral Togo was in this country, an American officer asked him how he accounted for the remarkable success of the Japanese over the Russians. Admiral Togo replied: 'The cause is not hard to find. They drink vodka; we drink tea.'"

The Fruits of Smoking. The world's greatest conflagration is supposed to be the San Francisco catastrophe of 1906, when earthquake and flames destroyed $350,000,000 worth of property. That sum is little more than half of the annual fire loss in the United States from burning tobacco in cigars, cigarettes and pipes. On this greater destruction there is no insurance.

About 40,000,000,000 cigars and cigarettes were smoked in this country last year, additional to pipe smoking. More than one hundred billions of matches and stubs must have been thrown down by smokers, and many billions of them unextinguished. Juvenile smokers and those drunken or careless are a constant menace around stables, store-houses, dock buildings, lumber yards, in mines and forests and on the prairie. The smoker naturally tries to conceal or disprove his responsibility for a conflagration, but he sometimes fails in this attempt. The Indiana fire marshal in one year gave as the cause of 130 fires, "Careless smoker."

"No Smoking" signs almost everywhere attest the charge that all smokers are fire hazards. A cigarette is more dangerous than a cigar or pipe, because, when once lighted, it usually burns to the wet portion of the stub, whether it is in the user's mouth or thrown into combustible waste on the factory floor. Many an unsolved fire tragedy at sea, or in the mine or munition factory, probably is caused by a man seeking the solace of a smoke, with disregard for the safety of property and lives.—Henry N. Pringle.

Forceful Words from the Leading High Explosive Expert of the World. While I am no friend of the cigar or the pipe, and believe that the use of tobacco in these forms is but a lesser evil, I hold that the cigarette is in a class by itself and its evil effects are not those common to the use of tobacco in other forms. The smoker of the pipe and cigar finds his injury in the nicotine, while the nicotine of the cigarette is far less virulent than the deadly carbonic oxide and other products of its poisonous combustion. *The cigarette burns poisonously.*

Owing to the loose structure of the cigarette, its combustion is modified and destructive distillation proceeds with combustion, and owing to the incompleteness of oxidation, carbonic oxide is largely produced instead of carbonic acid. This carbonic oxide when inhaled in small quantities produces faintness, dizziness, palpitation of the heart, and a feeling of great heaviness in the feet and legs. These are exactly the effects of the cigarette, and the depression and nervousness which follow as a reaction make the victim crave some balm or

tonic for his *malaise*. He is led to consume the drug in ever increasing quantities.

The wreath of cigarette smoke which curls about the head of the growing lad holds his brain in an iron grip which prevents it from growing and his mind from developing just as surely as the iron shoe does the foot of the Chinese girl.

If all boys could be made to know that with every breath of cigarette smoke they inhale imbecility and exhale manhood; that they are tapping their arteries as surely and letting their life's blood out as truly as though their veins and arteries were severed; and that the cigarette is a maker of invalids, criminals and fools—not men—it ought to deter them some. The yellow finger stain is an emblem of deeper degradation and enslavement than the ball and chain.—Hudson Maxim, in The Boy's Magazine.

It is a Handicap. One of Chicago's old-time stockyard magnates, who was a philanthropist as well as a pork-packer, had an intense dislike to cigarettes and would not allow anybody to smoke them in his establishment. One day a half-grown youth found him alone at his desk, and asked for a job as office boy. The packer looked him over kindly enough but shook his head. "I'm afraid you won't do, son," he said.

The lad, who was rather effeminate in appearance, had received several similar answers during the day, and was somewhat discouraged. So now he said with some bitterness, "It's my yellow hair, I suppose."

"What is your name, my boy?"

"John Harris."

"Well, Johnny," said the millionaire packer, "it isn't your yellow hair. It's your yellow fingers."—Youth's Companion.

Judge Lindsey's Testimony. I have been in the Juvenile Court ten years and in that time I have had to do with thousands and thousands of boys who have disgraced themselves and their parents, and who have brought sorrow and misery into their lives; and I do not know of any one habit that is more responsible for the troubles of these boys than the vile cigarette habit.

The Fruits of the Drug Habit. Recent revelations in the courts disclose the frightful ravages that the drug habit is producing among a certain class of young men and women. These ravages are not limited to the body. They involve the whole personality and bring down morals and intellect in complete ruin. A medical correspondent of The Times speaks impressively of the spread of the cocaine habit, the origin of which is found in South America. The natives discovered there that by chewing the leaves of a certain plant fatigue was replaced by a feeling of exaltation. "But the time comes when the victim cannot do without cocaine, and deprivation brings depression, terror, hallucinations, and even madness. The great majority of its victims are destroyed by the drug. In India it has been officially estimated that natives who take to the drug die as a rule in three months. The habit was recognized as a grave menace to India, and strong steps were taken to cope with it. It has lately spread to China."—A London Paper.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight, for the children of men.—Alice Cary.

"Going to the bad is a poor way to prove that you are a good fellow."

"When a bad habit seizes a man it marks the afternoon of his opportunity; when it rules him, it brings the night."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How do the Synoptic Gospels differ from the Fourth Gospel? 2. What does Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about ostentatious giving? 3. About true treasures? 4. About singleness of service for God? 5. About the uselessness of worry? 6. What judging of others is necessary? 7. What judging of others is wrong? 8. Does Jesus teach in the 7th chapter of Matthew that every request of ours, whatever its nature, God will grant? 9. What does he mean? 10. Why do we call Mt. 7.12 the Golden Rule? 11. Are you trying to live by the Golden Rule?

Note-Book Work. V. Lessons from Jesus about the False and the True.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC (WORLD-WIDE PROHIBITION)

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but there is much difference between the two ways. The way of life is this: First, thou shalt love God who made thee; second, thy neighbor as thyself, and whatever thou wouldst not happen to thee, do not thou to another. But the way of death is this: First of all it is evil and full of curse.

The above reads like a commentary upon the first two verses of our text. It is from "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," a work that was in use in the early Christian Church. This is World's Temperance Sunday, and we must devote most of our time to a discussion of that special way of death which is evil and full of curse, but we may profitably consider for a few moments the text on which this lesson truth is based. (See the Text Explained.)

The Death of Alcohol. The conscience of the country has long protested against the use of alcohol as a beverage. At first the campaign against it was of the pledge-signing type, of the days of John B. Gough and T. S. Arthur. Finally science joined in the campaign against the common enemy. Life insurance companies, physical culturists, and the medical profession took up the fight. But still the wave of progress hesitated.

Then came the great Danger! The War brought home to us with stunning effect the need of the conservation of manhood. We saw that we could not afford, for any matter of ease or self-indulgence, to trifle with what meant life or death to a nation's efficiency. And war, which seems to be entirely evil, has actually done more to save the coming generations of Americans than anything else has accomplished.—Dr. Frank Crane.

World-Wide Prohibition. We are prone to speak in superlatives of remarkable events that we ourselves have witnessed; yet it is probably true that the action of the United States in absolutely forbidding the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors anywhere in the country is as astonishing an example of social reform accomplished by law as the history of the world has to show. The war doubtless quickened the movement toward prohibition, not only through the widely felt necessity for national sobriety at such a time of crisis, but through its subtle effect in breaking down old prejudices and modes of thought and in opening the human mind to every sort of innovating and reforming influence. We are to live in a new world henceforth; a world that will have little of the leisure and abundance of the world before the war, and little, too, of its laxity and self-indulgence. The struggle for life is going to be harder than it has been, and for most of us the burdens are to be heavier. It is perhaps a subconscious recognition of the coming trial that has determined the people of the United States to have done at once with the long endured impediment of the liquor traffic; for although the movement toward prohibition has been steady for a number of years, so quick and decisive a victory did not seem possible even so recently as three or four years ago.

But since it is not the nature of moral reforms to confine themselves strictly within political boundaries, the prohibitory crusade has already set a new goal for itself—the deliverance of the entire world from bondage to alcoholic liquor. American workers are established both in Australia and in Japan, and they hope to bring both those countries into line within five years. In Australia as in the other British colonies there is already a foundation for the prohibitory campaign in the "Strength of the Empire" movement that arose during the war; Japan, which has in the last generation so profoundly modified almost all of its customs and manners, is believed to be especially favorable ground for a reform movement.

So far we have not heard of any serious attempt to urge absolute prohibition upon Great Britain or France or Italy or Germany. The drinking of beer or wine is so deeply rooted in the habits of all those countries that it seems at first glance a hopeless task to eradicate it. But those who labor in a moral cause are not deterred by what seem impossibilities to less ardent natures; they do, as a matter of fact, often accomplish the things that they have been told were impossible. Sooner or later battle to the death against alcohol will be declared in the European countries also. The battle will not be won at once, but after the revelation we have had in this country of the moral power be-

hind the prohibitory movement he would be a bold prophet who dared predict that it would not be won in the end.—Editorial in Youth's Companion.

America Challenges the World. Nothing like this—no such self-imposed act of abstinence—has ever before been popularly voted in any country. The prohibition of vodka in Russia at the beginning of the War, of course, affords no comparison. That prohibition, wise and beneficial though it was, was an autocratic decree. The American people in the exercise of the fullest liberty have decided for themselves. And we can have no hesitation in saying that a new era has been opened up, a new school in social practice has been founded, and a new body of thought created among democratic English-speaking peoples about the use of drink.

Reflections upon the probable economic effects of a dry America ought to be a sobering thought, so to speak, for everyone here. Before the War, roughly one hundred and fifty millions a year were being spent in Great Britain upon drink. Think of the desperate straits to which successive Chancellors of the Exchequer were driven in order to raise a few millions for some needed reform or for some national amenity of life! Think of the violent discussions which the necessary financial measures provoked!

By all their industrial arts, by their standardization and other expedients which have enabled them to produce things cheaply, although all the elements of production are dear, the Americans have already challenged every industrial nation in the world to a terribly hard encounter. Can we continue in that competition with any credit and profit to ourselves if we continue to fight, as it were, with one hand tied behind our backs? If American labor leaders believe that the efficiency of workers is reduced by drink, and that it is not to the interests of working-men themselves to have facilities for drinking, since the prosperity of the worker depends directly upon his productiveness, American employers of labor are just as strong in their opinions, and even stronger. The majority of the employers are determined not to tolerate in their midst an agency of demoralization which means, in its worst aspects, personal demoralization, bad time-keeping, and reduced output. Doctors concerned for the national health, and social workers tracking crime to its source, all swell the chorus.

What is the lesson for ourselves?—The London Spectator.

A Vision of the World Free from the Drink Curse. If really, for once, the entire civilized race of mankind should abstain from alcohol for thirty years, there would result a transformation, a raising of the whole culture *niveau*, a heightening of the happiness and welfare of men, which could easily be placed beside the greatest historical reformations and revolutions of which we know anything.—Professor Weygandt.

What is Being Done to Bring About World-Wide Prohibition. In working for a dry world the Sunday-school forces are already active, and this is written a year and a half before this lesson is studied. Special attention is given to the movement by the various Field Secretaries of the World's Sunday School Association who are located in Cairo, Manila, Tokyo, Shanghai, Pyengyang, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Ayres, and Santiago, Chile. They are all provided with effective posters and the best temperance literature, much of which has been translated into the various languages. Mr. K. Uchida, of the House of Peers, Japan, is especially interested in the movement. He heads a Safety First Prohibition Organization that is expected to promote prohibition from the standpoint of Japan's highest welfare.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The Sermon on the Mount. See Studies in the Sermont on the Mount, by Cleland Boyd McAfee.

2. The progress that has been made since the War toward world-wide prohibition.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How do the Synoptic Gospels differ from the Fourth Gospel? 2. What are the accomplishments of worry? 3. What are the consequences of worry? 4. Why is worry absurd? 5. Why is worry un-Christian? 6. Are you worried about something now? 7. Are you worried about something that is past or something that is to come? 8. What does Jesus say about such worry? 9. What is the teaching of Mt. 7.1-15? 10. What is the teaching of Jesus in regard to our getting what we ask in prayer? 11. Can the Golden Rule be carried out in business?

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Golden Text

Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6.33

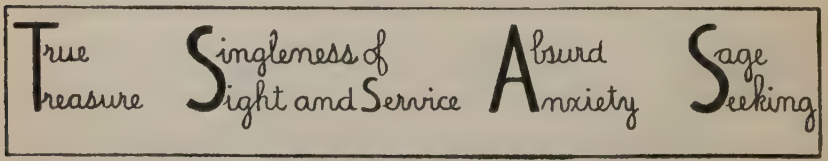
LESSON Matthew 6.1-7.12 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 12.9-21

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Mark 10.23-31; Luke 11.2-4 12.22-32

MATTHEW 6.19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. 22 The lamp of the body is the eye. if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 25 Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? 26 Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? 28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. WORLDLINESS AND OTHERWORLDLINESS, verses 19-21. "It is a peculiarity of the Hebrew style, often occurring in Scripture, to make an absolute statement which is designed to be understood relatively," and when Jesus bids you *Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth*, he is not speaking against wise provision for the future, but is contrasting the value of earthly and heavenly treasures. Rather than avariciously to store up perishable treasures on earth, which may be destroyed by moth or rust or stolen by thieves, he

counsels you to *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,* which are indestructible. *For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also,* and your heart must be fixed on God alone.

II. SINGLENESS OF SERVICE, verses 22-24. *The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* "If you would see clearly, you must see singly. Not that our King bids us fix our gaze on one solitary object to the exclusion of everything else; but he does bid us fix our gaze on some object which shall be paramount, and control our vision."

But if thine eye be evil, diseased, *thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness,* if your spiritual vision is darkened, *how great is the darkness!* "There is a trouble of the eye called by opticians asthenopic, which is distressing and painful. If I were to look in the Greek language for a word to express this, I should find **Πονηρός,** the very word used by our Savior and translated by our revisers *evil.* This condition brings great confusion, and even darkness, from the fact that the person troubled sees two images of the same object, a true and a false, and is often unable to distinguish them. If your moral perceptions are so perverted as indicated by the metaphor of the asthenopic eye, leading you into confusion, darkness and error, in the vain attempt to serve two masters, you exclaim, 'How great is that darkness!' and the echo from many a disconsolate, erring soul, answers, 'How great is that darkness!'" (L. T. Palmer.)

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve, be the slave of, *God and mammon.* The word *mammon* comes from a Syriac word meaning *that in which one puts his trust,* and because so many put their trust in riches, the word has come to personify riches. You cannot put your trust in God and also in riches. Not to have, but to serve, riches is a sin. "How do you know there is but one God?" asked a father of his son in order to test him. "Suppose, after all, we should be mistaken, and it should turn out that there are a great many gods?" "Why, father," the boy replied, "where would you put them? There's room for only One." You cannot serve God and mammon; there's room in your heart for loyalty to only one.

III. BE NOT ANXIOUS, verses 25-32, 34. *Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life,* in regard to the things of mammon, *what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?* Five times in ten verses Jesus say, Be not anxious. He who gave the life and the body will give you lesser things, food and raiment. The Authorized Version reads, *Take no thought for your life,* because at the time that translation was made the words included the idea of anxiety, and meant *take no anxious thought.*

A lesson from the birds Jesus next gives: *Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns.* It is not idleness or want of forecast which Jesus commends in the birds, but their freedom from care. One evening Luther watched a bird as it sat perched on a limb of a tree, and then he said: "This little bird has had its supper, and is now getting ready to go to sleep here, quite secure and content, never troubling itself what its food will be, or where its lodgings on the morrow. Like David, it 'abides under the shadow of the Almighty.'" *Are not ye of much more value than they?* Jesus questions.

> "He who, from zone to zone,
> Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
> In the long way that I shall tread alone,
> Will lead my steps aright" (Bryant, Lines to a Waterfowl).

Next, Jesus brings out the waste of worry: *And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?* he asks. The Greek word *ἡλικία,* may mean extent either of life or of height (stature, A. v.); although a cubit is ordinarily a measure of space (about 19 inches), it sometimes refers to time. Compare the saying of Queen Elizabeth when dying, "Millions of money for an inch of time!" Did frettng ever mend anything or lessen any trouble? "If minding will not mend it then better not to mind."

Now comes a lesson from the flowers. *And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither*

do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. "Jesus here shows his vivid feeling for the beauty of nature. All of the magnificence of Solomon was nothing compared with the charm of the common flowers that sprang up by the roadside. What is true of the lily was doubtless true of the whole of nature, in the eyes of Jesus. Sunsets and sunrises—the far-off pearly whiteness of Mount Hermon, the deep blue of Galilee, the breakers of the Mediterranean shore, all thrilled him as they had never thrilled any other man. And for two reasons. He was a normal man in all particulars, with his senses raised to their full development; and the whole creation to him was a message from his Father"(Rollin H. Walker).

But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven (See Light from Oriental Life), *shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* "Note that it is not said he clothes the field with grass. He clothes grass itself. For there is a time when the grass is naked. It is bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other kind. But in that bare grain, in every naked seed of grass, there is packed a whole set of weaving machinery, distilling apparatus, and pumping gear; and along with it all there is packed driving power in the shape of vital force. Place the seed under favorable conditions and the pumps begin to work, the shuttles begin to fly, and the grass receives its raiment of green or gold"(Expository Times).

"And I will trust that he who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads
And stains these mosses green and gold,
Will still, as he hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine"(Whittier).

Be not therefore anxious about food or drink or clothing, for which the nations are seeking, for you are children of a heavenly Father who knows that you *have need of all these things.*

But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Jesus is urging his hearers to make first things first. For us, God's Kingdom is his rule over his subjects here and now; God's righteousness is one of right relationship, love and loyalty, towards God and towards men, living in this world as he would have us live—in a word, Christ likeness. The rich man in the parable sought secondary things first and let the first go altogether, and he stood forth a beggar in the Kingdom: Jesus sought first his Father's Kingdom, and though they took from him even his garments, all things were added unto him and his place is at the right hand of God. "The promise is interpreted by David's testimony (Ps. 37.25) and by Paul's experience and assurance (Phil. 4.11, 19). So interpreted, life proves it true; those who give themselves wholly to God's service often live in poverty, but they rarely or never suffer for want of necessary food and raiment"(Abbott).

Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. "Let the principle be that all anxiety shall be *in* the future, not *about* the future"(Horton). When Jesus was on the cross, he took thought for his mother's future, and gave her into John's care. Forethought is wise, it is fore-gloom that is unwise. Foresight is good, foreboding is evil. *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

"One day at a time!
It's a wholesome rhyme—
A good one to live by;
A day at a time"(Helen Hunt Jackson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Where moth and rust consume, verse 19. When Jesus uttered these words, there was little or no conception of the usability of wealth; it was either expended for sensual pleasure or hoarded; and, if hoarded, generally in one of two ways—in rich garments and hangings which could be concealed from the tax-gatherer, or in jewels or coins which could be stored away in a pot, and, if necessary, buried in the ground. The moths corrupted the one, the thieves

broke through and carried off the other. Jesus condemned, not the acquisition of wealth, but its hoarding.—Dr. Lyman Abbott, in The Biblical World.

Consider the lilies of the field, verse 28. "In the low lands of the hill country whole tracts are scarlet or purple with the lilies of the field."

The Lilies of the Field

The grass of the field which is cast into the oven, verse 30. The term rendered *grass* includes weeds and flowers. All these wither very rapidly in the East (compare Ps. 90.6); and owing to the scarcity of fuel, this dried vegetation is still often used to heat ovens for baking bread. The oven was a large jar made of clay, wider at the bottom. It was heated by placing the fuel within, and the ashes being removed through a hole in the bottom, the flat cakes of bread were spread both on the inside and the outside and thus baked. Sometimes it was not a movable jar, but a fixture, and the primitive contrivance was probably a hole in the earth, with compacted sides.—John A. Broadus, in Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing on the Lesson. What have we learned about the glory of Solomon? How did David show himself free from anxiety?

Principles of Christian Living from the Sermon on the Mount. Sunday before last the closing words of our lesson text were, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Today we turn back to that point in the Sermon on the Mount. The citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven must excel in righteousness the scribes and the Pharisees. Three forms of righteousness—almsgiving, prayer and fasting, Jesus considered, and emphasized the fact that they are transactions between man and his Heavenly Father, and into them no thought of what others may say or think should enter. Then he gave his lesson about the true treasure and useless anxiety which is our printed text. Lessons about judging others and obeying the Golden Rule follow.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There is so much in the Sermon on the Mount that one could wish our Lesson Committee had given us an entire quarter for it instead of only three Sundays. From the entire lesson given for today—nearly half of the Sermon—each teacher may choose what the class most needs to consider. The Lord's Prayer is undoubtedly best for the Juniors, and the printed lesson text is one that Adult classes may profitably ponder.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: JESUS TEACHES HOW TO PRAY

Lesson Material: Matthew 6.5-15.

Suggestion for Begining the Lesson. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus talked to his disciples about prayer. First he told them how not to pray, and then told them how to pray. What is one way in which one should not pray?

How Not to Pray. The Jews, you know, had certain hours for prayer, and wherever a man was when the prayer hour arrived, there he stood and prayed. What did Jesus call those who loved to be seen in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets at those times? Why did they plan to be in such conspicuous places? They were showing off, seeking to gain a reputation for piety when they were not truly pious, just as Ananias and Sapphira sought to gain a reputation for generosity and self-sacrifice when they were far from being either. Verily, I say unto you, They have received their reward, said Jesus—they have been seen, and that is all they wanted.

Are men today ever like those Jews in this respect? One morning Mr. Moody met some young men at an early hour and asked where they had been. "To an all-night prayer-meeting. Don't you see how our faces shine?" "Moses wist not that his face shone," was Mr. Moody's quiet reply, which showed them their peril. They were in danger of standing and praying in the corners of the street that they might be seen of men. Instead of ostentatious prayer, what does Jesus counsel?

What is the next thing he says not to do in prayer? Use not vain repetitions, empty words that mean nothing to you, mere pious phrases devoid of all heart and faith and purpose. The Buddhists turn prayer-cylinders—here is a picture of one given me by a missionary friend in India. It contains pious words written on a piece of paper: and as the wheel revolves the Buddhist offers his vain repetitions. The Gentiles think they shall be heard for their much speaking: be not like them by saying over words which you do not mean.

How to Pray. As you talk to your earthly father so you may talk to your Heavenly Father, Jesus taught; and you can best talk to each when you are alone together. When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber where thou canst be alone with God, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. "Why do we say 'Who art in heaven' when God is everywhere?" a teacher asked a class. No one answered. "Well, little soldier, what do you say?" he questioned a bright laddie. "Because it's headquarters," came the quick reply. God's name stands for God himself. *Hallowed* means treated as holy, reverent. Swearing is profaning God. Irreverent worship is profaning God.

Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, in heaven, so on earth:

"Lord, when we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come!'
Then fold our hands without a care
For souls whom thou hast died to save,
We do but mock thee with our prayer."

When everyone's will is in as perfect accord with God's will as was the will of Jesus, then God's Kingdom will be established on earth as in heaven.

The Model Prayer is in two parts: in the first part the petitions relate to God, his name, his Kingdom, his will, and the pronouns are Thy, Thy, Thy. In the second part the petitions relate to ourselves, our bread, our forgiveness, our temptations, and the pronouns are us, us, us. Do we ever in our prayers reverse this order, and pray first and foremost for ourselves? Are we selfish in our prayers?

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, Give us this day our daily bread, he taught that we may bring to our Father all our wants, and not ours alone but those of others. And forgive us our debts. Our debts to God are sins, for which we are constantly in need of pardon. As we also have forgiven our debtors, Jesus adds: how often he interprets his Father's nature by what is best in man's! Do we ever ask to be forgiven and then cherish in our hearts hatred of others? And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Bring us not into trials that will prove too severe for us, temptation which we shall be unable to resist. Do we ever ask to be kept from temptation and to be delivered from evil, and then deliberately go where we know we shall be tempted? To pray the Lord's Prayer with sincerity is a very solemn thing.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Matthew 6.9-13.

Prayer is a true wish sent Godward.—Phillips Brooks.

Prayer must mean something to us if it is to mean anything to God.—Maltbie Babcock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What city was Jesus' headquarters during his ministry in Galilee? 2. What sort of man do you think this centurion's servant must have been? 3. How did the centurion show his belief in Jesus' power? 4. How did he show his humility? 5. What could you do for anyone sick in your home? 6. What could you do for a sick neighbor? 7. What is your Sunday-school doing for the sick here or in mission lands?

Note-Book Work. VI. The Lesson Title; what Jesus said about how not to pray; what he said about how to pray; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: GOLDEN RULES FOR LIVING Or, MEASURING UP TO CHRIST'S STANDARD

Suggestions for Beginning the Lesson. How many chapters of Matthew's Gospel are given to the Sermon on the Mount? Which are they? Why do we give them this title? What did we call them two weeks ago? (The Gospel of the Kingdom.) Today we have further golden rules for living as faithful members of the Kingdom.

About Ostentatious Giving. Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.

There is a legend of a man so good that the angels came down from heaven to watch his life. Then they asked God to grant him the gift of working a miracle. And obtaining their request, they asked him what power he wished. His answer was: "Let me do a great deal of good without ever knowing it!" Then the angels thought of this plan by which his wish could be carried out, that wherever his shadow fell so that he could not see it, it should have the power to cure disease, soothe pain and comfort sorrow. So the saint simply went about his daily life as usual, and everywhere he went his presence diffused virtue as the flower does its perfume. The people, respecting his wish, never spoke to him about his miracles. They called him only "the Holy Shadow."

Such power of doing good may be yours if you follow Professor Drummond's counsel in The Christian Life. "Put a seal upon your lips and forget what you have done. After you have been kind, after Love has stolen forth into the world and done its beautiful work, go back into the shade again and say nothing about it. Love hides even from itself."

About Censoriousness.

To a darning-needle once exclaimed the kitchen sieve,
"You've a hole right through your body, and I wonder how you live!"
But the needle (who was sharp) replied: "I, too, have wondered
That you notice my one hole, when in you there are a hundred!"

This is a translation of lines written by the Peruvian poet Saadi, seven hundred years ago. It seems as though he must have had in mind Jesus' words about the mote and the beam. In a very old book these words of Jesus are illustrated by a picture of a man anxiously trying to gaze into the eye of another man, to whom he can't get very near because a big beam of timber is sticking out of his eye, while a little dot represents the speck of dust, or mote, in the other man's eye. To most of us our own faults are like specks of dust, while the faults of others are like great beams of timber. Before we can see clearly enough to cast out the mote from another's eye, what must we first do?

"Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged," means that judging others is betraying of self, that "Every man imputes himself," as Tennyson puts it.

Laura E. Richards has a clever fable that illustrates this thought:—

A man was complaining of his neighbors. "I never saw such a wretched set of people," he said, "as are in this village. They are mean, selfish, greedy of gain, and careless of the needs of others. Worst of all, they are for ever speaking evil of one another."

"Is it really so?" asked an angel who happened to be walking with him.

"It is indeed!" said the man. "Why, only look at this fellow coming towards us! I know his face, though I can not tell you his name. See his little, sharp, cruel eyes, darting here and there like a ferret's, and the lines of covetousness about his mouth! The very droop of his shoulders is mean and cringing, and he slinks along instead of walking."

"It is very clever of you to see all this," said the angel, "but there is one thing which you do not perceive."

"What is that?" asked the man.

"Why, that it is a looking glass we are approaching," said the angel.

About Bringing our Wants to God in Prayer. In the Model Prayer which Jesus taught, we learn that our asking must be in accord with God's will, for we pray, Thy will (not mine) be done. "I am sure I shall receive either what I ask for or what I should ask," said Bishop Hall. This is what Jesus means when he said that as a father gives good gifts to his children, so the Heavenly Father gives good gifts to those that ask him.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

Just stand aside, and watch yourself go by;
Think of yourself as "He" instead of "I."
Pick flaws; find fault; forget the man is you,
And strive to make your estimate ring true.
The faults of others then will dwarf and shrink,
Love's chain grow stronger by one mighty link,
When you with "He" as substitute for "I"
Have stood aside and watched yourself go by.

—Strickland W. Gillilan.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are the Synoptic Gospels different in part? 2. What was a centurion? 3. What had this centurion done for the Jews according to Lk. 7.3-5? 4. What three qualities does the centurion show? (Sympathy, humility, faith.) 5. What did the centurion mean by his words in verse 9? 6. Who thought themselves "the sons of the Kingdom," verse 12? 7. What is the force of the last clause of verse 12? 8. Why did the multitudes seem to Jesus like shepherdless sheep when they had their Jewish leaders? 9. Of what have Jesus' words in verse 37 become the slogan?

Note-Book Work. VI. Measuring up to Christ's Standard.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: COUNSELS FOR DAILY LIVING Or, CITIZENSHIP IN THE NEW KINGDOM: CONDUCT

Lesson Material: Matthew 6.19-34. Or, Matthew 7.1-12.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "There's one person I've missed since my return to New York," declares Coningsby Dawson in The Story of the Trenches. "I've caught glimpses of him disappearing around corners, but he dodges. I think he's a bit ashamed to meet me. That person is my old civilian self. What a full-grown egotist he used to be! How full of golden plans for his self-advancement! How terrified of failure, of disease, of money losses, of death—of all the temporary, external, non-essential things that have nothing to do with the spirit." That new sense of values, that new realization of what is the greatest good, which came to this gifted writer through his experience in the War, is what Jesus would teach his followers in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Christian Life and Anxiety. Our lesson text contains a series of warnings against three kinds of anxiety.

The first of these is *business worries.* Christ tells his disciples that they are not to worry about money or food, and it is always either the one or the other of these two things that comprises the goal and object of every business transaction that has ever been started. Men are in business either to make money for the love of money or else they are in business to make a living for themselves and their families. The hours that have been spent in business worries are countless in number and every one has been in direct disobedience to Christ's command, "Be not anxious." He warns us that our first and main duty in life is not to accumulate wealth or to indulge in luxury. It is impossible to serve two masters; therefore we must not spend our strength in worrying about a secondary matter. This anxiety which we indulge in is caused by a lack of spiritual appreciation. The light that is within us is darkness and the darkness fills our soul.

Then Christ tells us that we must not worry about *our personal appearance and our health.* He points out that even Solomon in all his glory could not com-

pare to the lilies of the field that were unadorned and just as nature made them. Since man's effort in the cause of personal adornment is so far short of nature's handiwork, he should cease to worry about so trivial a matter. He then takes up the question of worry in relation to health, and he tells us that no man by anxiety can add a single cubit to the length of his life. At the present time it is a well recognized medical fact that the best way to succumb to an epidemic is to constantly worry about your health. The mind acts on the body and the body reacts on the mind, and the man of faith, who walks in quiet confidence, never doubting or fearing, retains his health, while the anxious mind weakens another man's body and makes it readily yield to the dreaded illness. One thing is sure, that all our lifetime we are subject to the dangers of disease and death. Our worrying about it does not help us in any way.

The third thing that he warns us against worrying about is *the future*. Each day brings its own cares, and today must not borrow tomorrow's trouble. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Carry the burden of today; when you actually have to bear the burden of tomorrow, much to your own surprise you will have all the strength that you need. That is God's way of helping us.

Christ did not limit himself to preaching a new philosophy of life; he also taught his disciples how they might put that philosophy into practice. The way he suggests is the way of substitution. Instead of seeking the things that the nations seek after they are to substitute a search for other objects. They are to seek his Kingdom and his righteousness. The center of interest must change.

Randall in his New Philosophy of Life shows that there are two ways of emptying a glass of water. One way is to turn the glass upside down, and the other is to substitute shot for the water by dropping it in, shot after shot, until the water is crowded out. This is the Bible way of crowding out anxiety. We have not the power to empty our souls of all anxiety by turning them upside down, but we can drop into our souls, moment by moment, and day by day, prayer, meditation, Bible study and worship, until our minds are so filled with the thought of God and our souls are so filled with longing for God that we have no room left for anxiety.—Condensed from a Sermon in The Christian Work by E. A. McAlpin.

The Christian Life and Censoriousness. See the Second Topic.

The Christian Life and Prayer. Ask, and it shall be given you. He who does not pray does not claim citizenship with Heaven, but lives, though an heir of the Kingdom, as if he were a child of earth.—Cardinal Newman.

The Christian Life and the Golden Rule. Be in this world the kind of men that all men need to be! measure your manner towards men by the standard which you feel all men ought to adopt; whatever you would that men should do to you, whatever attitude you think any man anywhere ought to take towards you, be sure that you take towards him. If any man thinks the Golden Rule a simple matter, let him put it to himself in this way: Am I the kind of man that I think every man ought to be? Suppose everybody became like me in spirit, would this, then, be the kind of world that would be the very best that men can make it? That is the Golden Rule. I am to be in my place whatever I would like any man to be in his place.—Dr. Cleland Boyd McAfee, in Studies in the Sermon on the Mount.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The power of prayer, subjective and objective.

2. How to obtain release from anxiety. See Chapter X of Under the Highest Leadership, by Dr. John Douglas Adam.

3. Our nation now is finding its soul, and the soul of a nation is devotion to principles.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do the Synoptic Gospels agree so closely? 2. Why do they differ at times? 3. What was a centurion? 4. What additional information about the centurion is given in Luke 7? 5. What is the force of the centurion's reference to himself in verse 9? 6. Why was the centurion's faith so marvelous? 7. To what current belief did Jesus allude in verse 11? 8. What did Jesus mean by the last clause of verse 12? 9. What does Heb. 4.15 say about Jesus? 10. What is being done today for the sick? 11. What is the missionary teaching of the lesson? 12. Is our class doing all it can for the poor and sick?

THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Golden Text

And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. Matthew 9.35

LESSON Matthew 8 and 9 DEVOTIONAL READING Hebrews 1.1-9

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Mark 1.29 to 2.12; Luke 7.1-10

MATTHEW 8.5 And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: 12 but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. 13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

9.35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

The Centurion's Remarkable Confidence in Jesus	The Plentiful Harvest and Paucity of Helpers

I. THE CENTURION'S REQUEST, 8.5-7. One day as Jesus entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, an officer in charge of a century or company of one hundred men (sometimes fifty). He was a Gentile, possibly a proselyte, who had built a synagogue for the Jews at Capernaum (Lk. 7.5). He came to Jesus with a great request: his servant who was dear unto him (Lk. 7.2) lay at home *sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.* "Some diseases then classed as paralysis produce violent pain" (Broadus). Jesus at once promised that he would come and heal him.

II. THE CENTURION'S FAITH, 8.8-10. Jesus, as a Jew, would be rendered ceremonially unclean by entering the home of a Gentile, but this Gentile felt himself unworthy of receiving so great a Guest. *I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof,* he told Jesus; *but only say the word, and my*

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JESUS THE HEALER

servant shall be healed, he added. Then he illustrated the power of a word from Jesus by his own experience: *For I also am a man under authority; I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* If he, a man under authority to others, could say to his soldiers, "Go," and at once they would obey, how much more might Jesus, under authority to God, say to the disease of the servant, "Go," and it would be gone!

Jesus marvelled and turning to the crowd that was ever about him, he said, *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* And he contrasted the faith of this Gentile with that of the Jews: In all parts of the world there would be many who possessed as great faith as this centurion, he said by his metaphor that *Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of heaven,* while the *sons of the Kingdom,* the Jews who thought their birth gave them a right to the Kingdom, *shall be cast forth into the outer darkness,* shut out from the gay feast within and thrust into the dense darkness without. *There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth*—"part of the familiar Jewish imagery of the future world of punishment, which was typified by Gehenna." "Do not talk in your arrogance as if the pious Buddhist or Mohammedan stood forever outside the gates of God, while you are certain of a place at the banquet of heaven; if they believe sincerely all they have to believe, and live by it—and you do not—it is they who will pass into the light of God, and you will stand without" (Dawson).

III. THE CENTURION'S REWARD, 8.13. Then turning to the centurion, Jesus said, *Go thy way;* as *thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* Thy blessing shall be as great as thy faith. *And the servant was healed in that hour.*

IV. THE POWER AND AUTHORITY AND SYMPATHY OF JESUS, 9.35, 36. According to Josephus, there were two hundred and four cities and populous villages in Galilee, and Matthew tells us that Jesus *went about* them all, *teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.* And looking upon the multitudes Jesus *was moved with compassion for them,* because they were distressed and scattered, vexed by needless burdens and uncared for by their professed religious teachers, the Scribes and Pharisees. To Jesus they were like *sheep not having a shepherd.* This figure of speech was a striking one to his hearers, for their sheep were not pastured in enclosed fields, but wandered freely in uninhabited regions where there were wild beasts and other dangers and the constant care of a shepherd was necessary.

V. THE HARVEST AND THE WORKERS, 9.37, 38. To Jesus the multitudes seemed like a vast field ready for reaping, and he said to his disciples, *The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest* (My Father is the Husbandman, Jn. 15.1), *that he send forth laborers into his harvest.* "At Jacob's well we heard the Lord discourse to his disciples for the first time on the harvest of souls. His observations at that time breathed joy and satisfaction. In the present text there is a note of distress. He has traversed the entire country and everywhere beheld shepherdless multitudes, thousands of souls hungry and thirsty for spiritual meat and drink which their ordained shepherds could not and would not provide. The decadent Jewish Church had become unfit, by training and temperament, to take care of the religious needs of the people. The Lord of the harvest had himself come upon this vast field, and with a handful of believers that had been drawn to him was providing the true soil for the masses. In this text he appealed to his beloved people in all ages to recognize their opportunities for extending his Kingdom, and to make the need of the spiritually abandoned their own by taking it to God in prayer. Justly, this text has become the slogan of the church in her missionary endeavors" (W. H. T. Dau).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

My servant lieth in the house sick, verse 6. "It would have been entirely in accord with the manners of his day—a day in which the servant was a slave without any civil rights, liable to be tortured in a court of law, and to be slain at the caprice of a brutal master—if the centurion had scorned the inmates of his own household."

Roman generals were noted for their cruelty to their slaves. An exception was Cicero, who possessed several other virtues uncommon in a Roman. When a devoted slave who had served him many years, died, Cicero followed his body to the grave. The people were amazed to see him weeping, and Cicero regretted his show of feeling and apologized for having so far forgotten himself as to weep for a poor slave.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Of which one of the Beatitudes is this centurion an example? When Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, what diseases did he heal? From what districts did the people come to him to be healed?

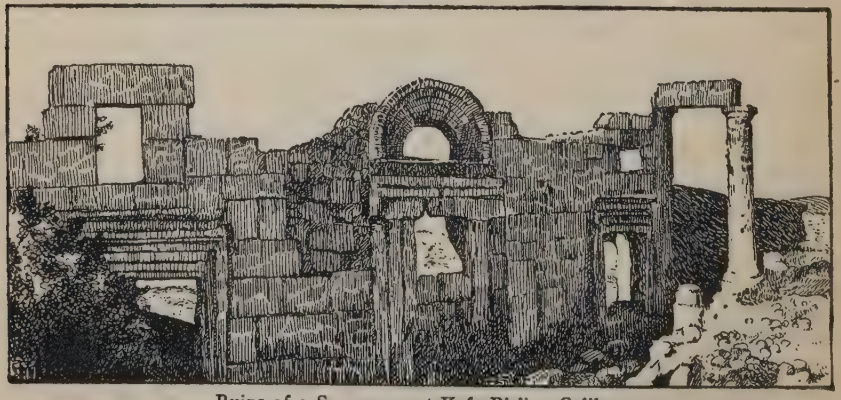
The Power and Authority of Jesus. From our study of Jesus as the Great Teacher we now turn to a study of him as the Great Physician. In chapters 5-7 Matthew gives the Sermon on the Mount; in Chapters 8 and 9 he records nine special miracles which Jesus wrought. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught as One having authority, in the recorded miracles he acted as One having authority; in both he proved himself the Messiah.

At Capernaum, Jesus' headquarters, there was a Roman garrison, hence the presence of the centurion.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: JESUS HEALS A CENTURION'S SERVANT

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. What is our Golden Text? It tells us of the work in Galilee of Jesus the Great Teacher, Preacher and Physician. We have a beautiful story today about Jesus the Physician. There are three chief characters in the story: who are they? And the story tells of three miracles: let us see what they were.

A Story with Three Miracles. First, there was a miracle of *service*. The servant in the story may have been a slave, but he was probably a soldier. He belonged to the Roman garrison stationed in Capernaum. Palestine in Christ's day, you know, was under the rule of the Romans, and Capernaum was a very important city on the Sea of Galilee. Point it out on the map. Now this servant was stricken with paralysis. He was not only helpless, but was in great



Ruins of a Synagogue at Kefr Bir'im, Galilee

pain. One day his captain—who was called a Centurion—spoke to him something like this: "I can't stand this any longer. I have heard of a great Physician who is able to cure all diseases, and I am going to find him and ask him to cure you."

Why was this centurion so concerned about his servant? It would have been easy enough for him to secure another one in his place. But, you see, he loved that man who served him. Perhaps in some battle he had saved his master's life, or perhaps it was his careful, thoughtful, constant devotion to his master

which had won the latter's love. However it was, he had achieved a miracle of love. And that is the miracle which true service works today as well.

Then there is a miracle of *faith* in the story. The centurion was a good man, one who was interested in religion. Luke tells us that he had built the Jews a synagogue. So he was a rich man, too, for it took a large amount of money to build a church even in those days. He had thought much about Jesus, and had come to the conclusion that Jesus could do anything. "Here am I, a soldier, who has only to speak to be obeyed," he thought. "My men are under my authority, and do as I tell them. And it will be the same with this great Physician. He has command over all the forces of healing, and if he orders them they will obey." And when he came into Jesus' presence he told him this. Jesus offered to go to his home. "There is no need of your doing that," he quickly answered; "and I am not worthy of such an honor. All you have to do is to say the word and he will be healed." A wonderful faith that—a very miracle of faith. It made even Jesus marvel, and drew a word of praise from his lips.

Then there is the miracle of *healing*. The servant was healed that very hour. His suffering and helplessness all disappeared. I wonder whether he took the trouble to go to Jesus and thank him. The centurion was right. Jesus had authority and power, limitless in effect—it could cure all manner of disease and all manner of sickness: limitless in reach—it could cure at any distance: limitless in exercise—master or slave, Jew or Gentile, it could heal them all. And this is true of his power today to cure all manner of sin, of any sinner, even if he is as far off as the prodigal.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse, Luke 7.16.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was "doing good";
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.—Whittier.

Learn the luxury of doing good.—Goldsmith.

Thy dreams of noble doing are but seeds,
And all about thee lie the waiting fields;
Sow thou in faith and love—the season yields
The perfect flower that crowns unselfish deeds.—Antony E. Anderson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Name the twelve apostles. 2. Where were the apostles sent by Jesus? 3. To whom were they sent? 4. What were they to preach? 5. What were they to do? 6. Why? 7. Whom does Jesus today ask to carry his message to those who do not know him? 8. How can you help in this work?

Note-Book Work. VII. The Lesson Title; a statement about Jesus' work; four statements about the centurion; why Jesus praised him; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE RESPONSE OF JESUS TO HUMAN NEED

Lesson Material: Matthew 8.1-17; 9.35-38.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "It was a common belief for many ages," so the Youth's Companion reminds us, "that a mysterious fluid existed in the bodies of kings, which enabled them to heal diseases by their touch. Science disproved this superstition long ago. But it is true that a mysterious spirit in the soul of certain persons gives them the healing touch, and that without it, strive as they may, they can neither cure nor help. It is simply love for their fellows, giving them their sympathy and help, as Jesus gave himself for men." Jesus everywhere and always "went about doing good," by preaching, teaching, healing, and living. We have studied for a few weeks some of his words as a Teacher: today we study his work as a Physician. (See the Lesson Text Explained.)

How Jesus Heals Today. The primitive meaning of the Saxon word *Savior* is all-health, and that is what the world-Savior truly is. Christianity never ignored any part of man's nature. From the very first it was a gospel to the whole man, body and spirit. In this it truly followed its Founder, Jesus Christ, for he was to his age the Great Physician. This part of his ministry so deeply

impressed the writers of the Gospels that the first three give as much space to accounts of his healing as they do to his preaching.

India alone has three hundred thousand lepers. In Korea small-pox is so common that if you ask a man how many children he has he will tell you how many of them have had small-pox, so uncertain is he of the lives of those who have not had the disease. The non-Christian world is in the main most unsanitary. The village pond in many parts of heathendom supplies the water for man and beast, for drink and bath and wallow. It is surely no wonder that out of such conditions of squalor and filth should rise terrible scourges of disease.

In the face of this deep need heathenism has been for centuries looking for help to the native medicine-man. Those who attempt to heal the sick in Africa and Asia work largely by magic. These quack doctors will administer as medicine boiled spiders, centipedes, caterpillars, or minerals, stones, or anything that suggests itself. One authority has calculated that four million people are killed annually in pagan Africa alone through quackery.

Conditions are better today than yesterday and will be better tomorrow than today. No church today overlooks the need and opportunity of medical work in non-Christian lands.

Yet in the non-Christian world there is only a beginning of service to the body. In the United States and Canada there is one physician to every six or seven hundred of the population. Taking heathendom as a whole, there is probably one physician to every two million people. But doctors are multiplying, natives are being trained, and hospitals are rapidly being introduced.

Jesus always used his healing power in illustration and in commendation of his Father's love. Over the entrance of one hospital are the words, "While treating the disease, do not omit to treat the man." This injunction fully states the attitude of Christ toward diseased men. While he gave to his disciples the commission, "Heal the sick," he did it as the "Man of compassion," who did not forget any fundamental need of mankind. But the Great Physician's soothing, healing touch was the broad scythe which swept a harvest to his feet. So the ministry of healing has a motive above itself.

The hospital in the Orient is the by-product of Christianity, the direct outgrowth of the gospel. It is a school where Christianity is easily learned.—Condensed from an Article in The Sunday School Journal, by Frank Orman Beck.

How Gladstone Followed his Master's Example. "Has any one been to see you?" asked the Vicar of St. Martins-in-the-Fields one day of a poor crossing-sweeper who was lying ill.

"Yes," was the answer, "Mr. Gladstone."

"Which Mr. Gladstone?"

"Mr. Gladstone," repeated the sick man.

"But how came he to visit you?" asked the vicar. He could not understand why the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though he was then living in that parish, should call upon a crossing-sweeper.

"Well," said the invalid, "he always had a word for me when he passed my crossing; and when I was not there, he missed me. He asked my mate, who had taken my place, where I was, and when he heard I was ill, he put down my address on paper. So he called to see me."

"And what did he do?"

"Why, he read to me out of the Bible, and prayed."

His Way. I always keep pasted up in my surgery, where sometimes the continuous stream of patients coming to see the doctor calls for more sympathy than I have to give, and is apt to make one irritable and useless because unsympathetic, these old words:

"He did kind things so kindly—
It seemed his heart's delight
To make poor people happy
From morning until night."

Any time I happen to look up it is a clarion call to me that, if I would find joy, the real way is his way.—Dr. W. T. Grenfell, in The Congregationalist.

She Could not Heal but she Could Help. After a long siege of illness a man was making slow progress toward recovery. The strain of nursing had told seriously on his wife's strength. The weather was suffocatingly hot. One day Mrs. Poll, her Italian scrub-woman, said pityingly to the tired, anxious wife:

"You look-a bad. You feel-a sick?" The next time Mrs. Poll came she said: "You look-a bad, why not tak-a him to the country?"

"O Mrs. Poll, I can't afford it. I haven't the money," was the answer.

The woman then said softly, pleadingly, "I have-a money in the bank."

"The hand which I seized was coarse and hard-working, it was not even clean," said the tired wife in relating the incident, "but it seemed to me the most gracious hand in the world. What a pitiful little sum she had stored away I do not know, but if it had been millions it would not have been a greater offering. She seemed disappointed that I did not avail myself of her riches, and I could not make her understand she had given me something far above money."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Health is the first wealth.—Emerson.

> Look into the depths of thine own soul;
> How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?—Lowell.

We have no business to die till we can leave the world a little better for our having lived in it.—Margaret Deland.

The main purpose of a good life is not to preserve one's goodness, but to make it useful and effective.—Dean Hodges.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which Gospel was probably the first one written? 2. What is the meaning of the word *apostle?* 3. Of the word *missionary?* 4. Why were the twelve told at this time to preach only to the Jews? 5. In Christ's last command to them about the preaching whom were they told to reach? (Matthew 28.19.) 6. In what words did Jesus tell the disciples that they would be under the watchful care of God? 7. Name some of the successors of the apostles who have been doing the same work. 8. Are we doing all that we can to help the laborers in God's harvest?

Note-Book Work. VII. Jesus the Great Physician.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS POWER AND AUTHORITY Or, CHRISTIANITY AND PHYSICAL NEEDS

Lesson Material: Matthew 8.1-17; 9.1-8, 35-38.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "Were we to judge the employment of Jesus by his recorded acts only, without reference to his sayings," observes Dr. George D. Boardman, "we might in strictest propriety say that Jesus followed the medical profession, for out of forty-five specifically narrated miracles wrought by him, thirty-six were miracles of restoration from sickness and death, to say nothing of the vast multitude of his other cures of which we have no specific record."

Credentials of Jesus the Christ. In a recent number of The Christian Work the Rev. Frederick Lynch gives the following report of a sermon he heard Dr. Jowett deliver in Westminster Chapel:

He read the passage that tells of John the Baptist sending his friends to see if Jesus was the one for whom they were looking. Was it he, or must they look for another? Jesus tells them to go and tell John what they have seen and heard.

They saw the blind receive sight, the deaf receive hearing, and the lame walking. They heard the Gospel of the Kingdom. They were to go and tell John these things. The general subject of the sermon was Christ's credentials. Were the credentials which convinced John those which evidence the presence of Christ today? Dr. Jowett believed they were. Today there had been a wonderful outburst of healing in all the world. Some of it was very wonderful. Never had surgery achieved such triumphs. The bodies of men were being thought of as holy, as of worth, as Christ thought them, and nothing was being spared to make them whole. We were feeding the bodies of men all over the world. Dr. Jowett claimed all this for Christ. All this care of the body was a witness to Christ in the world. The whole impulse came from him. There could have been little of it had he not come and healed and fed human bodies.

Dr. Jowett went even farther. He wondered if perhaps we were not discovering, even as Christ knew, the close relation between soul and body, and were the Church brave enough to make some great venture of faith, would we not find that the soul possessed of the very presence and dynamic of God would

have such influence on bodily condition as we had never dreamed? He would not be dogmatic on the question, but he could not help wondering. It was the tremendous influx of the divine power through Christ that worked the healings John's disciples witnessed. Were we to realize Christ's presence as did those afflicted ones, might it not have healing grace again?

But Dr. Jowett did not stop here. It was the spiritual miracles also to which Christ called the attention of those inquiring messengers. The gospel was preached to the poor and they were made rich. Anyone is poor who needs anything. Anyone is poor who is dissatisfied with present attainment. Anyone is poor who is not his fullest, highest self. Anyone is poor who has not God in his soul. To these divine dissatisfactions and needs Christ ministers, and where the poor become rich there is witness of Christ in the world—for no one else can meet all the needs of the soul. But more than that, these questioners found Christ actually restoring men to their sonship in God. Here is the real witness to Christ in the world today. Every day he is lifting men out of their fallen estate to their rightful place in the Kingdom. We are seeing wonderful instances of it today. All this outburst of loyalty, courage, sacrifice is of Christ. If not of him, where is its source?

Modern Institutions of Mercy Must be Credited to Christ. Search the Byzantine Chronicles and the pages of Publius Victor, and though the one describes all the public edifices of ancient Constantinople and the other those of ancient Rome, not a word is to be found in either of a charitable institution. Search the ancient marbles in the museums of the world, descend and ransack the graves of Herculaneum and Pompeii, question the travellers who have visited the ruins of the cities of Greece and Rome, and in vain will you seek for the report of a single public institution of mercy built and supported for the alleviation of human want and misery. These things in the life of mankind and in the history of the world follow the cross of Jesus Christ.—David Gregg, in Our Best Moods.

The Influence of the Mind upon the Body. The report of Dr. Jowett's sermon given above, alludes briefly to the power which the soul or the mind has over the body. While it does not strictly come under our lesson topic, it is a theme which Adult classes may profitably consider. Here is what Bruce Barton has to say on the subject:

I was reading yesterday the story of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's courtship. Emerson told the tale to Edward Everett Hale, and it is recorded in the Life of Dr. Hale by his son.

"Emerson was here today," writes Dr. Hale to his mother, "and told me the details of Robert Browning marrying Miss Barrett. She was an invalid—never left her bed—her father a jealous old man who let no one see her. Browning and she had complimented each other in print but had never met.

"How can I see Miss Barrett?" he cried in Carlyle's parlor one day.

"And Mrs. Carlyle answered: 'You can't see her at all,' giving reasons as above.

"At which he took his cane, went to the house, asked for Miss Barrett, and by the blunder of a servant, who thought him a doctor, was admitted to her bedroom.

"She had not moved for three months—was bed-ridden: but at the end of the first visit she lifted her head in bidding him come again; the second time she sat up; the third, stood; and closed the fourth by eloping with him to Italy, where they now are—her cure being a complete one."

So they lived together through life, loving each other, and doing their work. She, never quite strong, but able still to go ahead, borne up and carried forward by the power of her love. Had Robert Browning never found her, the chances are she would have continued a bedridden invalid, and died young. There is a law in physics to the effect that "two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time." The same law applies in the mental world. Two thoughts cannot occupy the same mind at the same time. The lesser thought gives way inevitably to the stronger. I knew a woman once who, like Elizabeth Barrett, had stayed in bed for years. She was fully convinced that she would never walk again; and she had succeeded in convincing everyone else around her. One day, when she was alone in the house, it caught fire. And before she realized it she had jumped out of bed, dressed herself, and made off down the road. Her fear of fire had banished her fear of exertion. For the first time in years she was

lifted out of herself by the power of a great emotion—and that was all she needed to be well.

The War has been a great curative agent for lots of people. Men who never had a thought except their business and their indigestion have forgotten themselves in the new-found joy of doing something for their country. Women who have "enjoyed poor health" for years have spent their days working for the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A., and are amazed to discover how much vitality and working power has been concealed within them.

Said wise old Sam Johnson: "I think there is some reason for questioning whether the body and mind are not so proportioned that the one can bear all which can be inflicted on the other; whether virtue cannot stand its ground as long as life; whether a soul well principled will not be sooner separated than subdued." He had bad health most of his life; and his medicine was work, as Elizabeth Browning's was love.

For half the troubles in the world this is the best prescription: Fall in love like Elizabeth Browning, or work like Sam Johnson, and lose the petty thinking of yourself in the great passion for something or someone else.

Shall we Pray for the Recovery of the Sick? I was once asked to call upon a sick lady whose physician had sent me word that she could not recover. Overwhelmed by a sudden and great sorrow, she was dying of a broken heart. As I entered her room she met me with a submissive smile and said, "I hope I am resigned." My reply to her was: "You have no right to be resigned. You have no right to die. It is wicked for you to die. It is your duty to get well; your duty to your husband and to your children. You have no right to leave them." The shock startled her, gave her a new view of the situation, awoke in her a sense that it was worth while for her to live, and aroused in her a purpose to live. Less than two weeks later I met her at the seashore in recovering health, and she lived for ten years or more thereafter. I did not suspend the operation of any physical law, and yet I was the means of her recovery. If a human spirit can do this for another human spirit, why shall I doubt that the Divine Spirit can do as much or more? The notion that we cannot pray to God because he will not set aside his laws to grant our request, if carried to a logical conclusion, would prevent our calling in a doctor in case of sickness or asking a friend for counsel in case of perplexity.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. It was a Roman centurion whom Christ praised as the finest type of faith he had ever met, and it was the childlike quality of his faith that made it remarkable. Soldier as he was, he was a child at heart. It is a common testimony of all those who have done religious work among soldiers that the soldier is hostile or indifferent to any form of religion which is coldly intellectual, but that he responds instantly to a religion which makes a simple and direct appeal to the heart. It would appear a strange thing to suggest a parallel between the mind of a soldier and the mind of a child; yet they are essentially alike, for they are each ruled by very plain and clear ideas of truth and duty, a very simple acceptance of life. And it is this kind of faith that we need—not a childish faith, but a child-like faith, and we are all capable of it, if we will but let our hearts rule us.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take God at his word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of the Lord.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

2. "The foundation truth of Christianity is the infinite worth of man."

3. The influence of the mind upon the body.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which of the Gospels was probably the earliest written? 2. How large a district was the field to which the disciples were sent? 3. When did Jesus declare that he had other sheep not of the Jewish fold? (Jn. 10.16.) 4. When did Jesus send his disciples to a larger field? (Mt. 28.19.) 5. How did Jesus tell the disciples that they need not be anxious? 6. What are the words which precede verse 37? 7. What does verse 37 mean? 8. Explain verses 40 and 41. 9. When the disciples were called by Jesus to become his followers, what was their equipment for missionaries? 10. What was their success when they took up the work after his death? 11. Could we do more than we are doing to help evangelize the world?

LESSON VIII—NOVEMBER 21

THE TWELVE SENT FORTH

Golden Text

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. Matthew 9.37, 38

LESSON Matthew 10 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 40.1-11

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Luke 9.1-6; 10.1-20

MATTHEW 10.5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: 30 but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

A Limited	Field but Unlimited	Work
The Heavenly	Father's Careful	Watchfulness
The Steadfast	Follower only is	Worthy of Christ
Aid Given to a	Friend of Christ is	Well-pleasing to Christ

I. A LIMITED FIELD, verses 5, 6. Matthew records the calling of the twelve disciples and gives their names, then tells us that *these twelve Jesus sent forth.* From the Greek verb ἀποστελλειν, translated *sent forth,* our word *apostle* is derived. Mark tells us that he sent them forth two and two (Mk. 6.7). And Jesus *charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans.* With their inborn hatred of Gentiles and Samaritans, the Twelve were not yet ready to labor among them (see Light from Oriental Life, page 78), and Jesus wisely restricted their field of labor at first to the Jews whom he calls *the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* In our last lesson we learned that he looked with compassion upon the multitude because they were as sheep without a shepherd. See Mt. 15.24.

II. AN UNLIMITED MESSAGE AND WORK, verses 7, 8. *And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This had been the proc-

lamation of John the Baptist (Mt. 3.2), and of Jesus when he began his ministry in Galilee (Mt. 4.17). Moreover, they were to *heal the sick, raise the dead* (recall Peter's raising of Dorcas to life), *cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely,* gratis, without pay, *ye received,* added Jesus, therefore *freely give.*

III. WARNED AND COMFORTED, verses 9-31. Jesus forbade his disciples to take extra things with them on their journey—money, bag for food, extra coat, shoes or staff—for they were worthy of being cared for physically by those whom they cared for spiritually. He directed them to abide in a worthy household, and if any one did not receive them gladly, to disclaim responsibility by shaking the dust from their feet as they departed; in the judgment it would be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than for the city that rejected them, his apostles. They would need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, for they were going like sheep among wolves, and he warned them that they must suffer persecutions, and drew a dark picture of world-wide hatred that they must endure for his sake. A disciple must not expect better treatment than his Master received. They must not fear those who can only kill the body. They must put their trust in their Heavenly Father, who cares even for the sparrows —and they were of more value than many sparrows—and in his own promise that if they confessed him before men he would confess them before his Father.

IV. SERVICE FOR CHRIST COSTS, verses 37-39. The disciples were enlisted for warfare, not peace: they must chose between him and those of their own households who were against him; homes would be divided, but they must hold his claims superior to all earthly claims.

The words of verse 37 have caused much suffering to sensitive souls who have misunderstood them. Pascal in his illness wondered if his affection for his sister who nursed him were not sinful. One day he wrote in his diary, "God forgive me for loving my dear sister so much," and then he drew his pen through the word "dear." We must not take these words of Jesus by themselves but in the context in which he uttered them. In the preceding verses he says: *I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's foes shall be of his own household.* There would be multitudes of cases where a man's allegiance to Christ would be opposed by members of his own household, and in those cases the man who cared so much for father or mother or son or daughter as to be willing to give up being a disciple of Christ was unworthy of Christ.

A disciple must *take his cross and follow after* him, for he that cares most for his physical life shall lose his spiritual life, and he that is willing even to die for Christ's sake, shall gain immortality. Remember that "to take up the Cross of Christ is no great action done once for all; it consists in the continual practice of small duties which are distasteful to us."

V. SERVICE RENDERED CHRIST'S MESSENGERS REWARDED, verses 40-42. In verse 15 Jesus told what would happen to those who would not receive his messengers: now he says that those who do receive them shall be remembered. He that received the apostles was receiving their Master, and he that received their Master was receiving the Father who had sent him. *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet,* that is, because he was a prophet, or *a righteous man* because he was a righteous man, and the receiver loves righteousness, should *receive a prophet's* or *a righteous man's reward.* "The words reveal a law of identification by moral sympathy of humble and holy men of heart with the great characters to whom their highest homage is given" —(Shepard). "In some respects it would have been easier to receive the Christ than the Twelve—the Christ whose face was now awful and now luminous, now so full of a strange light that man shrank back from him and fell to the ground, and now so full of an equally strange love that little children reached out their hands to come to him. To listen to this Man, who spake as no other man spake, no wonder that crowds thronged; but it was not so easy to give attention to the crude, raw Peter or the hesitating, doubtful Thomas, or even the fiery and loved John. Still Jesus sends his messengers and missionaries; men who have received his gospel into their hearts, men who have had some vision of him, or got from others some vision of a vision of him; still he says to men, He that receives my messenger, my disciple, my gospeler, the one who is doing my mission, receives me. If you cannot receive the Infinite, receive the finite manifestation of the Infinite. Throw open your shutters, and you take in

the sun because you take in the rays that come from the sun. Open your petals, Flower, and what comes to you? The rain-drops. You receive the cloud because you receive the messengers from the cloud. To receive the missioner of Christ is to receive Christ: to receive Christ is to receive the God who manifests himself in human guise"(Abbott).

He that gave *a cup of cold water only* to one of the disciples because he was a disciple should by no means *lose his reward.* "It is true, and it is a great comfort that it is true, that the giving of a glass of water can please God, and the sweeping of a room can glorify him. But woe be to us if we are content with small services. Too much thought of little things belittles. We should 'attempt great things for God.' Let us not be easily content. The note of heroism should be in our battles with sin, in our speaking, in our giving, in our serving. Our King deserves and expects kingliness"(Maltbie D. Babcock).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Enter not into any city of the Samaritans, verse 5. See page 78.

A cup of cold water only, verse 42. "In this hot and dry land, where you can wander for hours without coming on a brook or an accessible cistern, you say 'Thank you' for a drink of fresh water with very different feeling from what you do at home."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who were the disciples by the Sea of Galilee whom Jesus called to follow him? What did Jesus tell them he would make of them? What did he mean? What work have we seen Peter and John doing as apostles? How did they show that they had been with Jesus? How did they show bravery? Faith? Steadfastness?

The Sending Forth of the Twelve. Jesus was at the height of his popularity when he sent his disciples on their missionary tour. It was early in A. D. 29, and the place was somewhere in Galilee. The eager crowds who thronged him filled him with compassion. By sending to the people throughout Galilee the good news of the Kingdom through his disciples, he could reach a greater number. The twelve disciples, moreover, who had been learning as they accompanied their Master, could thus put their knowledge into practice and learn by doing. They went in pairs, as Mark informs us, therefore in different circuits, and may have covered Galilee fairly well in a tour of several weeks' duration.

Although Matthew records the choice of the Twelve in connection with their being sent on their mission, they had been chosen some time before this. He records in the same chapter words of advice, warning and encouragement which may have been spoken to the disciples at various times. Luke gives some of them as spoken by Jesus to the Seventy.

Assign paragraphs 88, 42-45 of In the Master's Country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Before Jesus left his little group of faithful followers he gave them his great commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation, but their first commission was a limited one, to their own people in their own little province. "If we would witness for God, we, too, must be ready for the limitations, if we care so to think of them, set by locality. It is in our own home and in our own church that we shall express ourselves, and there we shall take the place we are meant to take in the Kingdom of God. It is fatal for us to be thinking all the time, 'How narrow this sphere is!' There is no narrow sphere. It is a lamentable weakness to give to a small meeting or a small class less than our best, because so few are there, and they are not influential. What do we mean by influential? In its current use it is only to be explained by a false standard of values. The work of teaching the young is one which can be done powerfully only as it is done faithfully in its local expressions. The best lessons are hammered out in a definite class. The local task must be measured, not by any spatial metaphors, but by the standards of Jesus. How revolutionary they are! One soul is worth all the world! Therefore, to touch and win one soul

is a task of incomparable meaning. And yet we must have crowds of such souls before we are satisfied that we are doing a great work."

JUNIOR TOPIC: THE TWELVE APOSTLES SENT FORTH

Lesson Material: Matthew 10.1-10.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Who will name the twelve apostles? Here is the helpful way some one has put their names into rhyme:

This is the way the Disciples run:
Peter and Andrew, James and John,
Philip and Bartholomew,
Thomas next, and Matthew, too,
James "the less," and Judas (the greater),
Simon the Zealot, and Judas the traitor.

Why do we call them apostles? Yes, the word *apostles* means the *sent ones.* Today we hear how Jesus sent them out on their first mission tour.

The Twelve Apostles Sent Forth. The first missionaries were *sent men.* We read in the first verse, "He called them," and in the fifth verse, "He sent them." "Come," Jesus said, and when they came he at once said, "Go; there is a piece of work for you, go and do it." He does not call us to him that we may have a good time and enjoy ourselves, but that we may be of use to him and others.

The first missionaries were *home missionaries.* They were not sent to other lands, sent over the seas to strange peoples, or to far-off cities like Rome and Athens. They were sent to the towns and villages of their own lands, sent to their own people. They were strictly forbidden to have anything to do with the Gentiles. They must go to the Jews and keep to the Jews. By and by they were sent to the world, to all peoples, but they had to start at home.

The first missionaries were *heralds.* They carried no silver trumpets, wore no cloth of gold like heralds of a king. They wore the robes of peasants, and went on foot and were stained with dust of the way; but they were heralds all the same. When they came to a village or a town they had to say to the curious crowds: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Make ready to welcome it!" What a stir it must have made! And can't you imagine how the apostles enjoyed it all? It was glorious news, and it was glorious to be the heralds of it.

But we have better news still. We can tell others that the King has come, that he is on the throne, and has all power in heaven and earth. We can tell them that the Kingdom is here, all around us, knocking at every man's door. We can tell them that by receiving that Kingdom and serving it they can help to spread it until it covers all the world.—C. E. Stone, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

We May be Home Missionaries. What do we mean by "home"? Where is home? It is the house we live in, you say. Yes, that is home, but the word "home" means more than that. If you were in California and were to go to the railroad office and ask the agent for a ticket home, he would ask you where your home is, and you would tell him the name of the town in which you live. That is home. But the word "home" means something else. Suppose you were in Europe and some one over there were to ask you where your home is, you would say, "America is my home." So home means a number of things. It is not just the house you live in, but your town and state and country. This makes us understand what a home missionary is. He is one who tries to make Christians of the people in his home and his town and his state and his country. Every boy and girl ought to be a home missionary.

Then we can be missionaries to the thousands of people all over the country who do not love Jesus. I hear some boy say to me, "I can't go and tell them about Jesus. They are too many, and they are too far off." But there is something that we can all do. Do you know that there are a great many children in this country who have never seen a Bible or a Sunday-school? Now this is what you can do. You can help to send them Bibles and Sunday-schools. You can take some of the money that you spend for candy and soda water and ice-cream, and put it in the Home Mission collection in Sunday-school. Ten cents will buy a Bible for some little girl or boy who has none. That is better than an ice-cream soda, isn't it? Let's try it and see.

And there is another way we can all help. We can all pray. When we kneel

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down at night to ask God for the things that we want, let us not forget the boys and girls who have no Bibles or schools, and who do not know about Jesus. Jesus wants every boy and girl to be a home missionary.—Condensed from The Soul of a Child, by Stuart Nye Hutchison.

One Way in which we Can Help our Missionaries. During the Great War the number of pupils in the mission Sunday-schools was small because the missionaries did not have picture-cards to give out. "Every picture means a pupil," so the missionaries wrote. Can not our class gather together Bible pictures and many other things which the missionaries can give their pupils as rewards for attendance or for memorizing chapters of the Bible? Dr. Samuel D. Price, the Superintendent of the Surplus Material Department of the World's Sunday School Association, will tell you just what is needed, and where to send your articles. His address is 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Matthew 10.7, 8.

We are all missionaries, the sent ones of the King; and not our fields but our faithfulness matters.—George L. McKay.

The only feet he can use are ours,
The only hands he has, he has to borrow from us,
The only lips he can speak with, are ours.—Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was John the Baptist? 2. What did he do for Jesus? 3. What did he say Jesus is? 4. Why was John in prison when he sent his disciples to Jesus? (Mt. 11.3-5.) 5. What did he bid his disciples ask Jesus? 6. What did he mean by this question? 7. What reply did Jesus give?

Note-Book Work. VIII. The Lesson Title; the names of The Twelve; the commission given them by Jesus; three statements about Home Missions; the Golden Text; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: HERALDS OF THE KING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. When Michael Faraday was a boy he lived over a London stable and earned a few pennies a day by carrying newspapers around and lending them to customers. Then he went to work for a bookbinder, and while engaged in binding the Encyclopædia Brittanica he read many of the articles. The one on electricity greatly interested him. He studied it over and over, made experiments himself and took notes. One night he heard Sir Humphrey Davy lecture and he showed his notes to the great man. Davy recognized him at once as the pupil he had been looking for, and he often said afterwards that his greatest discovery was Michael Faraday. It was a source of much satisfaction to Sir Humphrey Davy that his pupil would carry on his work when he was gone.

Jesus had chosen twelve pupils to train so that they could carry on his work after him. What were their names? In Mark 3.14 we learn what was the object Jesus had in view when he called the Twelve. "And he appointed Twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." Now Jesus began to put his object into execution: "He called unto him the Twelve and began to send them forth two by two," Mark tells us. What directions did he give them?

The Beginning of the Great Missionary Enterprise. This sending of the Twelve is the beginning of Christ's great missionary enterprise. Do you remember Ezekiel's vision of the river (Ezek. 47.1-5)? He saw the river, as he puts it, coming out from under the threshold of the house eastward. At its beginning it was but a tiny trickling stream. You could have turned its course with the hand. But a thousand cubits lower down the stream had grown, and the waters were up to the ankles; and a thousand cubits farther on still, the water had grown still more, and reached up to the knees; and a thousand cubits farther still, and they were up to the loins; and a thousand farther still, and it was a river the prophet could not pass through. For the waters were risen; waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And everything lived wheresoever this river went.

"And he began to send them forth two by two"; this is the tiny and insignificant beginning of the stream. Six couples of preachers went through the

towns and villages of Galilee, saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." There was nothing to create a stir or to attract notice. But every mission the centuries have known has sprung from this one. This is the tiny seed from which grew Paul's vast labors among the Gentiles of the ancient world; Columba's apostolic labors in Scotland; Francis' labors in Italy; Xavier's devoted toil in the Far East; John Eliot's and David Brainerd's self-sacrificing work amongst the Red Indians; William Carey's service in India; John Williams' work in the South Seas; David Livingstone's in Central Africa; Hannington's labors in Uganda; James Chalmers' in New Guinea; the pioneering work of that splendid old man, J. G. Paton, in the New Hebrides, and the labors of many more of whom time would fail to tell. The great missionary enterprise began with the sending forth of these twelve men; but how vast is the multitude of the preachers! It began with the one small sphere of Galilee; but now the heralds of the Cross have gone into every land, from north to south, from east to west, preaching the good news of the Kingdom. The tiny trickling stream of these verses has grown into a great river today; and wherever the river flows it gives life. Thank God, the stream is still flowing, the waters are still rising, and rise they will until the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.—Dr. J. D. Jones, in The Gospel According to St. Mark.

The Master's Instructions to his Heralds. I dare say the disciples felt timid and distrustful, as they set forth to their new toil. They had never parted from Jesus before. It was with these brave and high words Christ sent them forth, "Care not," "Fear not."

"Care not." That is the essential meaning of these counsels about taking nothing for the journey, no bread, no wallet, no money in the purse. For God cares. Take no money in your purse—your Father will provide. Go to your work without anxiety—God is with you, God shall supply all your need.

And "Fear not." They were going as sheep in the midst of wolves. They knew how Jesus himself had been treated; very likely the same treatment would be measured out to them. "Fear not," said Jesus, God will protect, keep, and save you.

"Care not." "Fear not." They are still Christ's brave and cheerful words to his workers. "Care not": your Father cares. "Fear not": your Father watches. And men have gone forth in simple trust in those brave words of the Lord. When Carey set sail for India, the society that sent him had only £13 in hand—£13! But Carey went. He heard his Master saying, "Care not." Robert Morrison went alone to China. "Do you think you are going to convert those millions of Chinese?" "No," he replied, "but God can." "Fear not." "Care not." They are the Master's words to every Christian disciple. Life is full of anxieties and troubles. "Care not," he says: your Father knoweth.—Dr. J. D. Jones, in The Gospel According to St. Mark.

Freely ye have Received, Freely Give. In our First Quarter's lesson we had the story of how Simon Magus wished to purchase the power of giving the Holy Spirit to others, and Peter exclaimed in horror, "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money." Today we hear Jesus telling Peter and the rest that the gifts of God are given freely and must be passed on to others freely. The Greek word translated *freely* means *as a gift*. The apostles had not paid for their knowledge of the Kingdom and their power of healing, and it was their duty to pass on to others what they had received.

"Freely ye have received, freely give" is Christ's message to all. We have what others need, knowledge of the King, and as Christians it must be our desire to share the blessing with those who have it not. When a Chinese said to an American diplomat in China, "What right have you Christians to come over here to China and talk with our people regarding religion?" the American statesman gave this admirable answer, "The right to give others something that is too good to keep."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. No matter how regular the attendance on Sundays and at the midweek prayer-meetings, Christians who are contented merely to receive, and who never give their time and strength to the work of the Lord, will never be worthy disciples.—Dr. E. S. Ninde.

It is good for us to think that no grace or blessing is truly ours till we are aware that God has blessed some one else with it through us.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we know about the writer of the First Gospel? 2. What was his other name? 3. What did John the Baptist expect the Christ would do? 4. Why was he disappointed in what Jesus did? 5. Why was he imprisoned? 6. What was the meaning of the question he bade his disciples ask Jesus? 7. How was his faith in Jesus as the Christ restored? 8. How did the contemporaries of Jesus find fault with both John and Jesus? 9. Who received Jesus? 10. What beautiful invitation did Jesus give to everyone?

Note-Book Work. VIII. Heralds of the King.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE TWELVE COMMISSIONED AND SENT FORTH Or, RECRUITING CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. You know the saying of Archimedes in regard to the principle of the lever which he had discovered—"Give me a place to stand on, and I shall move the world." Jesus' purpose was to move the world, but he began by bidding his disciples stand first on their own home territory and make disciples of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Why did Jesus so regard the Jews of his day? "We can never ask a better leverage," some one has said, "from which to move our little fragment of the world towards truth and goodness than the point on which we have been placed."

The Harvest Field. Japan with its fifty millions has made wonderful strides in the last few decades. As manufacturers, mechanics, engineers, in education, medicine, scientific research, the Japanese rank among the most progressive nations. But the vast majority are still unchristianized, worshipping in the more than two hundred thousand temples with their hundreds of thousands of priests.

One-fourth of the entire human family are Chinese, but among this great multitude there is at the present writing only one missionary for one hundred thousand people. There are thousands of large cities where the Gospel is not yet preached.

India is about as large as the United States east of the Rockies, and it has one hundred and fifty million people who have never heard the Gospel story. In some parts of India there is only one missionary for every two million of the population.

While China has one-fourth of the world's population, Africa has one-fourth of the world's territory, and how few, relatively, are the missionaries in that land!

Can the task of evangelizing the world be carried out? "If the world is to be evangelized," says The Texas Christian Advocate, "American Christianity must have the large share of the task. We have been at ease because self-convinced that the undertaking was too great. But since we sent more than two millions of our young men to the war zone across the Atlantic—with millions more available—and since we spent for their maintenance more in a day than the most ambitious missionary program would require in a year, we can no longer excuse our inactivity on the ground that the undertaking is too great."

A Challenge to Laymen. The history of the wonderful spread of Islam until it became a world-religion is not without significance for us today. To the modern Christian world, missions imply organization, societies, paid agents, subscriptions, reports, etc. All this is practically absent from the present Moslem idea of propagation, and yet the spread of Islam goes on. With loss of political power, the zeal of Islam seems to increase, for Egypt and India are more active in propagating the faith than are Turkey or Morocco.

In Burma (where Indian merchants are the Moslem missionaries) the Moslem population increased thirty-three per cent. in the past decade. In the Western Soudan and on the Niger whole districts once pagan are now Mohammedan, and this has been, to a large extent, the work of lay missionaries—merchants, travelers and artisans. It would be an exaggeration to say that every Moslem is a missionary, but it is true that, with the exception of the Dervish orders (who resemble monks), the missionaries of Islam are the laymen in every walk of life, rather than its priesthood. Their Laymen's Missionary Movement is thirteen centuries old! On the streets of Lahore and Calcutta you may see clerks, traders, bookbinders, and even coolies, who spend part of their leisure time preaching Islam or attacking Christianity by argument.

The merchants who go to Mecca as pilgrims from Java return to do missionary work among the hill tribes. In the Soudan the Hausa merchants carry the Koran and the catechism wherever they carry their merchandise. No sooner do they open a wayside shop in some pagan district than the wayside mosque is built by its side. And is it not a remarkable proof of the earnestness even of the Arab slave-dealers, that, in spite of the horrors of the traffic, the very slave-routes became highways for Islam, and the negroes adopted the religion of Mohammed, to escape the very curse which brought it to them?

We have a better message, a more glorious faith, a higher motive, a richer reward, a more certain victory, a nobler inspiration, a better comradeship, and a Leader before whose great white throne and great white life the mock majesty and the white-washed immorality of Mohammed shrink in abject terror. *They* did it for Mohammed. Shall *we* not do it for our Savior in the spread of Christianity? And do it now, before it is too late?—Dr. S. M. Zwemer, in The Moslem Problem and Peril.

Questions for Ourselves. Our privileges are all meant for service: our personal blessings are all meant to serve the common good: what we know of Jesus is meant for the enlightenment of the world. Have we ourselves reached this second stage? Many of us have been learners for years; have we become teachers yet? We have been disciples for a lifetime; have we started work as apostles? We have enjoyed the most delightful times with the Master; but have we as yet begun to go forth and preach? Of course, there is no suggestion in all this that we should all turn teachers or preachers in the technical sense; but, short of that, have we, as opportunity is given, begun to tell to others, and to share with others, what we know of Christ?

I am persuaded that here lies the main reason for the slow progress of the Christian faith—that Christian men have been too content to remain in school all their days, instead of going forth to teach; they have been receivers, not givers, listeners, not tellers. They need to hear our Lord's second command, "Go forth." And if someone tells me that he does not feel fitted for the work of preaching and witnessing, I answer, neither were these twelve. They had very much to learn—you know what blundering scholars they were. But there were certain things they already knew. They knew that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand; they felt sure that Jesus was about to inaugurate that Kingdom; and they went and preached everywhere that, in view of the approach of the Kingdom, men should repent. That is what Christ expects of us. We feel, no doubt, that we have a great deal to learn; indeed, while life lasts we shall never finish our learning. But in the meantime we know something. We know that Jesus brings God near. We know that he breaks the power of sin. We know that he imparts peace and harmony into this life. Will you tell of that? Speak of what you know; testify of what you have seen.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. The mission of The Twelve. See Chapters IV to VI of In the School of Christ, by Bishop McDowell.

2. Jesus said to his disciples, Go to the lost sheep. Some people seem to think he said to the lost sheep, Go to the disciples.

3. It is the whole duty of the Sunday-school and the duty of the whole Sunday-school to give the whole Gospel to the whole world as speedily as possible.—W. N. Hartshorn.

4. The more we know of the world, the more doubtfully we ask, "Can such a world be saved?" And the more we know of Christian nations, the more incredulously we ask, "Can these be the saviors?" But the more we know of Christ's Cross for ourselves, the less we can believe that any soul is outside its destined range.—P. T. Forsyth.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we know about the writer of the First Gospel? 2. What was his other name? 3. What does tradition say about him? 4. What did Jesus say in Jn. 10.37, 38, about his works and our belief in them? 5. Could our lives as Jesus' followers prove his credentials as the Christ? 6. What does verse 6 mean? 7. Do you think John was satisfied with the answer his disciples brought back? 8. What is said in the Fourth Gospel about Jesus' peculiar knowledge of the Father? (1.8; 6.46; 7.29; 8.19; 10.15; 17.25.) 9. To whom does the Son will to reveal the Father? (Read the verses referred to in the Bible in connection with verse 27.) 10. What is the yoke he bids every one take? 11. How does Jesus give rest?

LESSON IX—NOVEMBER 28

HOW JESUS WAS RECEIVED

Golden Text

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28

LESSON Matthew 11 and 12 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.1-6

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Luke 7.18-35; 10.13-15, 21, 22; 11.14-26, 29-32.

MATTHEW 11.1 And it came to pass when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.

2 Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples 3 and said unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

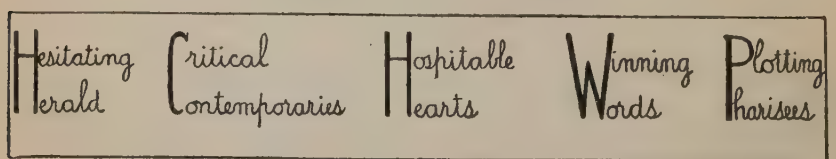
16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call upon their fellows 17 and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified by her works.

25 At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: 26 yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. 27 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

12.14 But the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD



I. A DOUBTING FRIEND REASSURED, verses 1-6. *And it came to pass* —so Matthew is wont to record the change from one section of his Gospel to another—*when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples* (our lesson of last week) *he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities,* the cities of Galilee.

Now when John the Baptist *heard in the prison* of Machærus, where he had been imprisoned by Herod (Mt. 14.3-5), *the works of the Christ,* through his disciples who told him of all these things (Lk. 7.18), *he sent by his disciples and said unto* Jesus, *Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?* "If thou art he that cometh, where is your ax?" John's question doubtless meant. "Even

now the ax lieth at the root of the trees," John had told the people. "He that cometh after me, fan in hand, will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor," he had continued: "and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." When John was free he had been the first to recognize that Jesus was the Coming One, the Messiah, but in his imprisonment he had grown doubtful, for to that caged eagle Jesus seemed too gentle and mild in his dealings with men to be the expected avenger.

John's disciples found Jesus busy with the very work that had disappointed John. The sick were coming to him and he encouraged their coming, to the poor he proclaimed the Gospel but uttered no word about the fire or the ax. Jesus stopped his work long enough to answer John's messenger. *Go and tell John,* he said, *the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them*—all a fulfilment of the prophecy as to the Messiah in Isa. 35.5. 6; 61.1. There was no word of rebuke for John's lack of faith, but this gentle message was added: *And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.* That is, Happy is the one who is not disturbed by the methods I use, by my ways of fulfilling my mission. And John must have understood: he had not been mistaken in bearing his testimony to Jesus as the Christ, but only in expecting the whirlwind instead of the still, small voice. The miracles were Christ's credentials. They proved his divine power, and they revealed his divine sympathy; they were *signs,* as they are called in the Fourth Gospel, recorded by John the Evangelist *"in order that* ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name."

When John's disciples had gone on their way Jesus turned to the multitude and spoke of John in words of highest praise, verses 11-15.

II. THE ILLOGICAL ATTITUDE OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOWARD JESUS AND HIS HERALD, verse 16-19. Jesus introduced a parable, or simile, by the query, *But whereunto shall I liken this generation?* By *this generation* Jesus referred to his religious contemporaries, the Scribes and Pharisees. You of this generation are as perverse, he told them, as *children sitting in the marketplaces,*—the public squares where the people congregated—who call out to other children, We played that we were having a marriage and you would not dance for our piping (playing upon an instrument somewhat like a flageolet), and then we played that we were having a funeral, and you would not weep with us. Nothing satisfies you; for when John came as an ascetic, *neither eating nor drinking,* that is, taking no part in the ordinary social life, you said *He hath a demon,* and when *the Son of man came* and shared the social life of others, you called him *a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!* What an insight into Jesus' life we get in these words, *the Son of man came eating and drinking!* They show that he was concerned, not with a part of life only, but with the whole, with social as well as spiritual interests. His action hallowed all social life, and his example was rightly interpreted by Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Wisdom (the wisdom of God, Lk. 11.49) *is justified by her works,* concluded Jesus. Results prove the wisdom of God: both John and Jesus had been sent by God, and results proved that their different characters and methods of working were part of his wise plan.

III. CERTAIN CITIES CONDEMNED FOR THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS, verses 20-24.

IV. JESUS GIVES THANKS FOR HIS FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS, verses 25, 26. Then Jesus turned his thoughts gratefully to those who had received his message, and thanked his Heavenly Father for having made his revelation, not to those who thought themselves *wise and understanding*—the Scribes and Pharisees—but to *babes,* unlearned people who with a true, childlike spirit had accepted his teachings. Compare Mt. 18.34 and 1 Cor. 1.26-30. *Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight,* added Jesus; and then he asserted that no one fully knew him, the Son of God, *save the Father,* and that no one knew God *save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.* Note that the truth that the Son wills to reveal the Father to everyone is shown in the universal invitation which immediately follows.

V. WINNING WORDS OF JESUS, verses 28-30. *Come unto me, all ye*

that labor and are heavy laden with sin, *and I will give you rest.* He gives rest to the toiling and burdened by giving them power to endure the toil and peace and pardon for the sin.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, that is, become my disciple, *and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* The "Yoke of the Law" expressed the burdensome nature of the ordinances imposed by the rabbis, and Jesus expresses the thought that his yoke is not burdensome by adding, *for I am meek and lowly in heart.* "My yoke does not consist of a multitude of burdensome ordinances like that of the Law and of the Pharisees. True, there are certain ordinances which every Christian observes, but they are few and simple. The essence of my religion is that men should be humble, and meek and loving and tenderhearted as I am, not hard and proud like the Pharisees." "We have perverted the meaning of the word *meek* to almost the opposite of the meaning given by our Lord. In our day a meek man is usually regarded as a weak man, one who is entirely lacking in the fine granite foundations of a masculine manhood. We can scarcely realize that as the Lord Jesus used the word it was significant of an abounding and useful strength. When some wild colt had been broken in and no longer raced about the wide field in useless liberty, he was described by the ancient Greeks as 'meek.' It was not that his strength had been in the slightest degree diminished; it was only kept within restraint and was surrendered to useful services. And our Lord describes himself as holding his infinite strength at the disposal of exhausted men and women. He is waiting to be harnessed to our load, waiting to carry our burdens. 'I am meek,' and yield my consecrated strength to the ministry of man!" (Jowett).

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. "'Lined with love,' is the quaint phrase with which Matthew Henry describes the 'easy' yoke of Christ. The yoke is that which binds us to service and compels our labor. In this work-a-day world of ours the yoke too often galls us. We strain. We toil. We wince. But the yoke which binds us to the service of Christ is easy to bear; as the Greek word suggests, 'the part on which it presses takes *kindly* to it.' Let organized strength, against our will and in spite of our protests, rivet a yoke upon us, and flesh and spirit cry out against it. But the yoke which we assume with willing hands, and fasten upon ourselves with glad, brave heart, may become a living glory" (C. F. Aked). "The yoke is like the plumage of a bird, which adds to its weight, but enables it to soar to the sky" (St. Augustine).

VI. DEADLY ENMITY OF THE PHARISEES, 12.14.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

We wailed, and ye did not mourn, verse 17. More literally, "did not beat your breasts." The scene that Jesus drew was what a modern child would call "playing funeral"; only in Palestine of Jesus' day the customs of mourning offered a much more fertile field for the heartless imitation of children than is the case with us. "Don't you know," says one child to another, "that unless you beat your breast when I begin to wail, you spoil the whole game?"—Shepherd Knapp, in The Biblical World.

My yoke is easy, verse 30. The oriental yoke is a clumsy affair that galls the shoulders and strains the neck of the ox. Orientals use the word figuratively for a rule of conduct. The rabbis imposed burdensome rules on the people, made the yoke grievous for them to bear.

My burden is light, verse 30. Because many streets in the East are too narrow and winding for wagons, huge packages are carried by human burden-bearers. In Palestine Explored, James Neil says: "I have often gazed at these poor fellows with mingled wonder and pity as I have seen them staggering past me along the broken and slippery stone paths of the streets of Jerusalem, bowed down under burdens so huge in bulk and so heavy in weight as to seem altogether beyond human strength. Were not the physical powers of these Syrian peasants developed in a very remarkable degree they could not engage all day long in such work. In the prophets the "burden" is used as a most expressive metaphor to set forth the denunciation of heavy judgments. Our Lord, too, has a plain reference to the toil of the *atal* or porter."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What kind of Messiah had John the Baptist expected? What did he say about an ax, and what did he

mean? What did he say about the burning of chaff, and what did he mean? What has Jesus done to fulfil John's expectations of judgment upon the wicked? What is the Beatitude about the meek? Who are the meek?

Matthew Eleven. This chapter gives us a survey of the result of Jesus' work. First, it records the relation of his work to that of John the Baptist and the consequent wavering faith of the Baptist's disciples (verses 1-15); second, his rejection by those who rejected also his herald (verses 16-19); third, a condemnation of the unrepentant people in the cities of Galilee which had been the most favored by Jesus' presence and work (verses 20-24); fourth, his reception by those who received him gladly; and fifth, an invitation to everyone to receive him, become his disciple.

The Castle of Machærus. According to Josephus, the fortress in which John the Baptist was imprisoned was Machærus, east of the Dead Sea, next to Jerusalem the strongest fortress of the Jews. Dungeons are still visible in the ruins, with holes in the walls that once held bars to which prisoners were doubtless chained. John's disciples brought his message to Jesus somewhere in Galilee. Assign paragraphs 172, 46, and 47 of Palestine in the Time of Christ.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"The secret of learning is to ask much, to remember much, and to teach much."

JUNIOR TOPIC: A QUESTION AND ITS ANSWER

Note. The topic chosen for Juniors by our Lesson Committee is "Friends and Enemies of Jesus." It seems too comprehensive a lesson theme for Juniors, and therefore I have limited my treatment to the first incident of the lesson, Matthew 11.1-6. In some denominations "A Story that Jesus Told"—the Parable of the Sower—has been selected instead. It is our topic for the next lesson, page 452.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Review Lesson V of this quarter.

The Question: Art Thou He that Cometh? I can see a great city, surrounded by a high, strong wall. Towering high above the houses is a royal palace.

Who are these men who have been admitted into the city and are coming straight toward the palace? Visitors to Herod? Oh, no! The guards lead them down long stairways into a dark dungeon built in the solid rock, where sits a solitary prisoner. How his face lights up at the sight of his friends! "Tell me about him," he cries, as soon as the guards have left them. "Tell me of the Master. Does his work prosper?" "Oh! it is wonderful," they answer him. "Crowds flock to hear him; they tell us he has just healed a Roman soldier's servant who was paralyzed and dying, and, more wonderful still, he has raised to life a widow's son at Nain."

"But tell me," asks John again, "tell me if he is attacking the wickedness of Herod—if he sent any message to me—if the Jews are making him suffer for his words and works."

"You say No? It is strange! Months ago I told the people, for so I had read the message of the prophets, that he was a Reformer, whose fan was in his hand, to drive away the chaff, a Victim, the Lamb of God that takes away the world's sin, and a Friend, in hearing whose voice I was happy.

"Reformer—Victim—Friend—he seems to be none of them!

"Go and ask him, 'Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?' Ask him. He himself will tell you."—George Allen, in Sunday School Chronicle.

The Answer: Tell the Things Ye Hear and See! I can see a great crowd of people, so great and so closely packed that you cannot tell who is in the midst of it. But the two men who have just reached its outskirts can guess. They have come to their journey's end. The dust is thick on their sandals, for it is an eighty-mile journey from the castle by the Dead Sea to the place where they have found Jesus.

See them working their way gradually into the midst of the crowd, taking no notice of the angry looks of those in front. Now they speak to him. "Master," and he turns quickly at their voices, "Master, John asks if you are God's Messiah, or if he is still to come." Did you notice the quick smile on the Master's face? Without a word of answer, he has turned away. Look! He is touching

blind eyes, and when he touches them the blind can see! He has stooped down to lift up a lame man, whom friends brought into the crowd. The lame can walk!

But they must get an answer to their question. "Master, are you God's Messiah?" He hears, but he makes no answer—only that smile overspreads his face again. Stand back! A leper is coming. Ah! take care he does not pollute you with his touch. But Jesus goes to meet him, touches the leper, and he is cleansed from his leprosy at once. Hush! They are bringing one who is dead into the Master's presence now, and the dead rises at his word.

But that question of John's. We must get the answer. "Master, are you God's Messiah?" No answer yet, but instead he turns to the poor folk who crowd round him, tells them, so simply and so tenderly, of the love of the Heavenly Father and of the Kingdom that is open to them all.

Then, turning to the two men, he says very gently: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard."

Away they go, for they know the answer, and John will meet death unafraid, for the Messiah has come.—George Allen, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

How We Know that Jesus is the Christ. A man once asked an oriental how he knew that there is a God. The oriental answered by inquiring, "How do I know whether it was a man or a camel that passed my tent last night?" He knew by the footprints. Then he pointed to the setting sun and asked, "Whose footprint is that?" Look at the footprints of Christ and see whether they are man's or God's. Whose prints are those by the gate of Nain, by the grave of Bethany, coming away from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa? Whose prints are those by the doors of sorrow, along the path where the leper, the blind, the lame, the demoniac waited for him?—Dr. J. R. Miller.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses, Matthew 11.4, 5.

O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is a parable? (Dictionary.) 2. Describe the four kinds of soil in the Parable of the Sower. 3. Who is the Sower? 4. What is the seed? 5. Describe the four kinds of hearers represented by the four kinds of soil. 6. In Mt. 12.33 how does Jesus say good men are known? 7. How do you listen to the reading of the word of God?

Note-Book Work. IX. The Junior Lesson Title; Where John the Baptist was and why he was there; why he was troubled; his message to Jesus; Jesus' answer; a statement of who Jesus is; a Sentence Sermon.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC: CHOOSING JESUS AS OUR TEACHER

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. By whom was Jesus baptized? Why was John called the Baptist? Where was he preaching and baptizing? What was his message? You remember that he told the Pharisees that "the ax lieth at the root of the trees"; he thought of the Christian as one who would judge the wicked of his day. What did he say about the burning of chaff? How eager John had been for the coming of the One whose way he was preparing! Then he saw Jesus the Christ going about doing good. Where was the ax with which he was to hew away all the false things that so irritated John? Jesus healed the sick. "That is all very well," John probably thought, "but when will he begin the work which I thought he was coming to do, the work of separating the chaff from the wheat?" Then Herod put John in prison. "Surely now Jesus will use the ax to deprive Herod of his power." But no, Jesus continued to preach and heal.

John, you see, had thought that Jesus was come into the world to condemn the world; John had not understood that Jesus was sent instead to save the world. John was so troubled that at last he sent his disciples to Jesus with a question. What was it? How was John reassured that Jesus is the Christ?

How the Chance to Choose Jesus as Teacher was Lost. "Come on Mary, come and play." "What are you doing?" "Why, we are playing at weddings.

John is playing the music, and all of us are the wedding guests who are dancing." "Oh, no; I don't want to play, it's too hot."

"Thomas, come and have a game at funerals." "How do you play?" "Oh, we have a long procession, and all of us keep on crying very loud, just like the hired mourners at a real funeral." "You can play that. I'm not going to join," and off goes Thomas, all by himself.

Years later the boy and girl, now young man and woman, are talking together. "Have you heard the new preacher, the one they call the Baptist?" asks Mary. "No," answers Thomas, "what have you heard about him?" "Oh, he's wonderful. He lives in the desert, dresses very roughly, eats very simple food, and preaches such terrible sermons, telling people they must give up all their sins, and be baptized as his disciples." "Well, have you been to hear him yourself, Mary?" "No! He seems to make people rather miserable. I don't think I shall go." "I shan't go, either. He might begin telling us of things he thought wrong, and try to take away our pleasures."

A little while after, the two friends meet again. They are coming away from a great crowd of people. "What? Have you been listening to Jesus?" "Yes! Surely no one ever taught as he does." "Are you going to become his disciple?" "Oh, no! I don't think so. Haven't you heard that he goes into the homes of the tax-gatherers and similar people, that he even talks with people of bad character, that he seems glad to share all the pleasures of ordinary life?" "Really! I don't think such a man can be God's Messiah." And, side by side, they walk away from Jesus—two of the people who are missing life's greatest chance.

On his great white throne sits the Judge, and before him are gathered all the nations.

"I never had a chance." "Nor I." Two friends are pleading. But the Judge reminds them sorrowfully of the missed chances of life. "You would not join in the games of childhood, merry or sad. You would not join in with John the Baptist, nor with Jesus of Nazareth. You missed your chance."—George Allen.

A Good Pledge to Make. "I am going to take Jesus Christ as my Teacher, my Example, my Savior, and my only Test of character. From this time forth I am going to cut myself off from associations which I know are doubtful, from habits which I know are demoralizing, and from acts which I know, however much I may try to deceive myself, will have their bad result in the years to come, and I am going to devote myself squarely and honestly to doing what I believe is right in the name of my Master."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. What Jesus does is the best answer to the question as to who he is.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

Christ's followers are those who are seeking to become what he is; his disciples are the men who are trying to learn the art of right living from him.—Dr. George A. Gordon.

The God whom no eye hath seen or can see, the Maker of heaven and earth, the God whom the widest thought of man has not comprehended, that God is brought within the range of our perceptions in Jesus Christ—and when we know the Son whom God hath sent, we know also the only true God, whom to know is Life Eternal.—Dr. Dawson.

We would be like him whom we call our Lord;
We would reflect the Image that we love.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. For whom did Matthew write his Gospel? 2. How many parables about the Kingdom does Matthew record in the 13th chapter? 3. What is a parable? 4. What are tares, and what is their effect in food? 5. Which one of the disciples was like the "tares"? 6. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Tares? 7. How many pecks in three measures of meal? 8. What meaning have all three parables of our lesson in common? 9. What special meaning has each?

Note-Book Work. IX. How Jesus was Received.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: HOW THE MESSAGE OF THE KINGDOM WAS RECEIVED Or, THE RESPONSE OF MEN TO THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. "Perplexity in regard to Christ arises from a deficiency of light upon the personality of Christ," declared Dr.

John Douglas Adam in an address at Northfield. "When you are swept by a train into a dark tunnel and are compelled to stop reading, it is not new eyes which you need nor a new book, but light. And you wait until you issue from the darkness and then you begin again. That is precisely the relation of all perplexed souls in regard to Christ. Insufficient light, no light, or false light are the sources of perplexity. The perplexity of John the Baptist was caused by the false light from his own imagination. He was not only a consecrated man, he was the most spiritual man of his time. He not only saw Jesus as the Messiah, but he saw Jesus as the Lamb of God, as the Giver of the Holy Spirit. But John the Baptist lost his faith. How did it happen? It was simply a twist in the man's imagination. He had a preconceived notion as to how Christ would operate, and Christ did not operate in that way. He thought he would come in the thunder and the lightning, and he came in the still small voice. It upset John the Baptist's faith."

John was in prison and he could not himself go to Jesus in search of the right light; he therefore sent his disciples.

When in Doubt as to the King. George Herbert, in his most readable little volume, "The Country Parson," has this wholesome word concerning doubts: "If you ever have any doubts, do not run away from them. If you think you see a ghost, go up to it and pull it to pieces. Possibly you will find instead of being a real ghost it is only a sheet that was hung out to dry and has been forgotten by the servant."

What sublimated common sense! And how many of us do just the opposite! We are inclined to believe our doubts, we are tempted to feed our doubts. What we ought to do is to doubt our doubts, investigate our doubts, do battle royal with our doubts, and put them to rout. This is precisely what John the Baptist did. When he began to doubt Jesus he squarely faced his doubt; he straightway began to doubt his doubts; and he sent his followers to Jesus himself, with the pertinent question: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"—Edgar DeWitt Jones, in The Wisdom of God's Fools.

Criticising the King. John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a demon. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

This censorious temper Jesus pronounced simply childish. What disturbed these Galileans was not John's austerity nor the genial tone of Jesus, but the divine intensity which led both to make inconvenient demands upon fastidious natures. There are people who can always find some plausible excuse for setting aside a religious appeal. They show a perverted ability in tabling objections to any form of religion, ascetic or otherwise, which impinges on their aloofness. What they really dislike is not this or that expression of religion; it is religion itself. A man may have puritan sympathies, or his disposition may be towards the larger and more catholic aspects of the faith. One form of Christianity may seem to him too sensational, another too formal; one too rigid, another too lax. But the main point is, does he want any of them? And the danger is that if fault-finding is indulged one gets into the way of being childishly determined not to be pleased at all, and of secretly discovering some colorable pretext for declining religion altogether.—Dr. James Moffatt, in Reasons and Reasons.

And Blessed is He, Whosoever Shall not Be Offended in Me. A chapter in The Evangel of the Strait Gate bears the striking title of *The Unattractiveness of Jesus.* The attractiveness of Jesus is an almost universally accepted conception. But is it wholly true? It is sometimes believed that if Jesus would come again, all mankind would listen to his words with eager obedience. But the prophet foretold Jesus' reception when he wrote, "He is despised and rejected of men." The Evangelist John wrote, "He came unto his own and his own received him not." Jesus himself described himself as "The stone which the builders rejected." And his most pathetic benediction is found in the words of our lesson text, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

Dr. W. M. Clow, the writer of this chapter, traces the features in Jesus which repel. The first feature is *the holiness of his character.* Deep down in the unregenerate heart there is an antipathy to holiness. Not only the youth who scoffs at sensitive purity and the young woman whose frivolous temper makes a mock of serious thoughts, but the ordinary man and woman is made uneasy and is secretly rebuked by holiness. As the intense light of his sanctity fell upon

Pharisee and Sadducee and discovered the devils lurking in their hearts, as it searched and exposed even the disciples, they shrank from him.

The second feature is *the mystery of his Personality.* There are minds which are simple and unquestioning. These are easily accessible to spiritual things, and are swiftly brought into tune with the Infinite. They find the mystery of the Personality of Jesus full of helpfulness and delight. But there are other men who are accustomed to the clear white light of material truths. They are eager to reduce all knowledge to the terms of mathematical precision. To them Christ's mysteriousness is a stumbling-block. Simply because Christ goes beyond the reach and grasp of such men they are hostile to him, and they resent both his divinity and his humanity. There was evidence of this fact in his own time. "Whence hath this man letters, never having learned?" was the taunting question of men baffled by his moral insight and unearthly wisdom.

The third feature is *the authority of his claim.* Whether it be a claim which he makes for himself, or one which he makes upon men for their obedience and their devotion, it arouses instantly a reaction in their hearts. Nothing more quickly arouses the defiance of a proud heart than authority. To that authority the reply uttered in the secret of the spirit is as Jesus told us in his parable, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

The fourth feature in Jesus which men resent is *the message of the cross.* It comes with its condemnation of the life they live, and love, and excuse. It comes with a requirement of repentance, and that is the most searching and humbling experience the heart can know. It comes with a call to a lowliness and humility which cuts deeply into the pride and self-sufficiency of the heart.

When and how is this unattractiveness overcome? There comes a time when some great need, or some baffling experience, or some disheartening and shaming fall, or some discovery of a man's true self, changes the whole angle of vision, and silences all the sounds of the world's music, and then he sees and hears Christ. There is a day when Jesus takes every man aside. He makes a silence in our lives. Then his voice rebukes and humbles us, and as he speaks with us the light dawns upon the soul and we begin to see what those saw in him to whom he became both their desire and their delight.

Come unto Me, and I Will Give you Rest. A woman in humble circumstances, the mother of four children, was suddenly bereft of her husband. She took up her burden with calmness and patience, toiling early and late that her children might obtain an education. A friend said to her one day, "Do you never get tired or discouraged?" "Oh, yes!" was the reply, "quite often, but when I think I can go no farther, or do no more, I go and rest in my easy chair." "Easy chair?" said her friend, looking around the bare room. "Yes, said the woman, "would you like to see it? Come with me." She led her into a small, scantily furnished bedroom, and, taking her by the hand, knelt by the bedside, and the toil-worn, burdened woman prayed as if she was face to face with God. Rising, she said, "Now I feel rested, and am ready for work again. Prayer is my easy chair."—Record of Christian Work.

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. It is a terrible moment when one who has poured out his strength in any cause is not quite sure that his sacrifice was warranted.—Dr. George Clark Peck.

2. The entire relations between John and Jesus afford a noble exposition of the art of friendship. There is both beauty and truth in a certain famous anecdote of two great men who loved each other "and agreed in everything but their opinion"; for friendship is based not on coincidence of opinion, but on moral appreciation. John might misread the ministry of Jesus, but never the divine beauty of his character.—Dr. J. W. Dawson.

3. The Master's estimate of John the Baptist. See Chapter XXIII of The Master's Way, by Dr. C. R. Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. For whom did Matthew write his Gospel? 2. What did he take for granted that his hearers knew? 3. What teaching that has special significance for Jews does his Gospel record? 4. What is a parable? 5. Do you think it easy to write a good parable? 6. Make an attempt to write a parable and compare the result with any of the parables of Jesus. 7. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Tares? 8. How would John the Baptist have differed from Jesus in his treatment of "tares"? 9. What is the best way to get rid of the "tares" in the individual heart? 10. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Mustard Seed?

THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

Golden Text

Fret not thyself because of evil-doers. Psalm 37.1

LESSON Matthew 13.1-43 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 60.1-3, 10-14, 19-22

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Galatians 6.6-10

MATTHEW 13.24 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? 28 And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

The Parable of the Tares and Wheat Teaches Tolerance

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven Manifest a Marvelous Optimism

I. THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES, verses 24-30. To the listening crowd on the seashore Jesus from his boat on the Sea of Galilee spoke several parables. The Greek verb παραβάλλειν, from which the noun *parable* is derived means literally *to place side by side,* hence *to compare:* a parable compares one thing with another. In one of his parables Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to *a man that sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept,* all unperceived, *his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away.* Phillips Brooks tells us that we lose the key and soul of all Christ's teaching if we lose what was always the great elemental truth to Jesus —the ownership of the field, the fact that everything belongs to God, and nothing ever takes place outside of his Fatherhood.

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Eugène Burnand

THE LEAVEN

Tares are weeds which closely resemble wheat in the early stages of their growth, but after the ears are formed the two are easily distinguished. The grain of the tares, or darnel, is smaller than that of the wheat and the kernel is black and bitter. To the question of the servants, *Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it tares?* the householder answered, *An enemy hath done this.* In Tyndale's version it reads, *An envious person hath done this,* and Dr. Joseph Parker says this rendering "seems to bring the text nearer to us and to make it appallingly English."

Tares

And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply (perchance) *while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them*—the roots of wheat and tares would be intertwined. *Let both grow together until the harvest,* counseled the householder, and then my reapers will *bind the tares in bundles to burn them, and gather the wheat in my barn.* By this figurative language Jesus teaches that the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked will be punished. The "how" we may not know; the fact we may be sure of.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED, verses 31, 32. In this parable Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to *a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.* This seed *is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree.* Although not the smallest seed known to botanical science (the seed of the lycopodium, one of the fern-worts, is smaller), the mustard seed was the smallest seed cultivated by the Jews and was popularly regarded as the smallest of all seeds. "The rabbis called the smallest possible quantity, 'the quantity of a grain of mustard.'" The mustard sometimes grows to a height of ten or twelve feet, and then *the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.* The meaning of this parable is that the growth of the Kingdom is sure. In the parable the husbandman does his part in preparing the ground and sowing the seed, and then he leaves it in the care of the earth, depending upon it together with the action of the sun and air and rain to carry the germinating life through the stages of its growth. So man must trust to a Power that lies beyond him for results, for the extension of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men depends not upon the agency of man alone but upon the power of God.

III. THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN, verse 33. In yet *another parable* Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to *leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.* Leaven is yeast. "It stands for that mysterious energy which lifts—the original meaning was 'to raise.' It lifts the materials of life to a higher level." Three measures, nearly four and a half pecks, was the usual amount for one baking, Gen. 18.6. At the Girls' Orphan School in Nazareth, marvelling at the size of the mixture which I saw ready for baking I inquired the amount: "Three measures," was the reply. In the interpretation of the parable, leaven stands for the influence of Christ: the Christian spirit works in the hearts of men as rapidly and thoroughly as yeast does in dough. "How the two parables of the mustard seed and the leaven supplement each other! The first brings out the progress achieved by the visible and organized efforts of men for the advancement of the Kingdom. Then lest men might feel that nothing was being accomplished where no such visible organized results were in evidence, Jesus hung before them the picture of the leaven. The yeast hidden in the meal did its work out of sight in an unorganized way. It illustrates the permeative power of the truth, the results achieved by subtle communication where one soul influences another, it scarce knows how" (Brown).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

His enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, verse 30. Trench, in his work on the Parables, states how common such a work of revenge is in oriental lands, and then adds that it has been known nearer home. He instances the case of an evicted tenant in Ireland who sowed wild oats in the field he was leaving, which it was almost impossible to get rid of, because they ripened and seeded themselves before the crops did with which they were mingled.

Let both grow together until the harvest, verse 30. The Germans call tares *dizzy grain,* because if ground into flour and eaten as bread they cause a dizzy sickness that is worse than seasickness. "Flour of mixed wheat and tares cannot be given even to animals," says W. H. Thomson in Parables and Their Home. "Hence all the baskets of wheat are carried from the threshing floor to the flat roofs of the houses, where they are emptied out on mats, and the tedious separation of grain from grain is carried on, sometimes for days, until the wheat is finally rid of this unhappy admixture. On one occasion, after an early start from a village in Mount Hermon, I felt a dizzy headache coming on which made me uncertain on my horse. My two Arab companions soon complained of the same trouble, till one of them said that he knew by experience what the matter was. 'The women of the village where we got the bread this morning were too lazy to get all the *zowan* (tares) out of the wheat. May their days be shortened!'"

The birds of heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof, verse 32. In the proper season the traveler in Gennesaret may ride by mustard-bushes as high as his horse and alive with flocks of merry bullfinches or of rock-pigeons feeding upon the seeds.—W. H. Thomson.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we heard about Jesus as a Teacher? What lessons have we had from his Sermon on the Mount? What have we heard about the Kingdom of God?

The Parables of the Kingdom. One day Jesus left his home in Capernaum and went down to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Entering a boat he sat there and talked to the throng of people gathered on the shore, telling them the parables which we call the Parables of the Seaside, or the Parables of the Kingdom.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Each of Jesus' parables teaches one central truth. One is sometimes tempted to derive several other lessons from the story, lessons which the Master Teacher never intended to have drawn from it, and which if enlarged upon would completely obscure the force of the parable's one lesson. One central truth, one topic at a time, well taught and well caught, will always far outweigh a number of truths dwelt upon in any lesson period.

The text given as "Additional Material for Teachers" has these comforting words: Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. To them, let us add the kindred parable about seeds, given in Mark 4, with its words of encouragement: So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. "What a reassuring thought to those who engage in spiritual effort and become disheartened oftentimes when they look for results!" writes Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown. "The utterance of some vital truth in a classroom on Sunday seems to issue in no immediate visible result. But the new idea once implanted, the new impulse once awakened, the new resolve quickened for a moment into action, is taken and conserved by the same sort of invisible and invincible forces as those which met the seed as it fell into the soil. And then as the teacher sleeps and rises quite unaware of what is in process beneath the surface where his eyes do not reach, the realm of human nature is bringing along results of itself. When our visible efforts have ceased and our spoken words have been hushed, unseen energies are still at work in which we may safely confide. The Kingdom of God grows steadily because it has behind it the push of invincible forces."

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE STORY OF THE SEED

Note. "The story of the Wheat and the Tares" is the lesson assigned by our Lesson Committee, but the Kingdom philosophy of this parable is not easily grasped by young children, nor is its lesson of special value to them. Therefore I have taken instead the parable of the Sower with its easily understood lesson that hearts are like different fields and deeds are like fruits. In some denominations the story of the Ten Lepers has been chosen for Juniors today, but we are

studying the Gospel of Matthew and it is better, I think, not to have a lesson from another Gospel.

Lesson Material: Matthew 13.1-8, 18, 23.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. A Parable is a truth taught in a little story. And there has never been any one who could teach such great truths by such skilful stories as could Jesus. A parable tells us what something is like. It is a story which helps us understand something else. A little girl's definition of a parable, that it is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning" is not a bad definition. Have you read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress? That is a very long parable which shows how people may get to heaven. Most parables are short.

In a parable there are three things:

A picture for the eye.
A story for the ear.
A lesson for the heart.

What is the picture for the eye which Jesus gave in his parable of the Sower? (The sower, the four kinds of soil; the birds; the seed, rocks; growing plants; the thorns; the grain.) What is the story for the ear?

The Lesson for the Heart. It is the same sort of seed which the Sower sowed in the four different kinds of soil, but in three of the soils there was no fruit. Why? So it is the same word of God which is heard by different listeners, but the result varies according to the listener's heart. One listener *hears* but he does not heed—the seed does not spring up at all—God's word does not have a chance to begin to grow into fruit. Another listener *hears and heeds,* but he does not resolve to obey, and so the seed which springs up at first soon withers away, then there is no fruit of good deeds. The third listener *hears and heeds and resolves,* but he does not persist. The seed germinates and grows awhile, but it does not ripen because it is neglected. The fourth listener *hears and heeds and persists*—the seed springs up and grows and ripens into good deeds that do not cease.

The Bird Field and the Weedy Field. In the bird field there are swift wood-pigeons, that go flying into the distance; there are lazy crows wheeling into the air, and flapping out of danger with a "caw, caw," as much as to say, "We are not caught yet." The blackbirds fly screaming into the hedge, and little birds rise up from the field in a cloud. We can't help thinking that we know many fields just as badly off as this. How many boys and girls there are in whom all the good seed is eaten up by the fowls of the air; and who does not know the names of many of these birds? One busy, bold bird that steals much good seed on all sides, is called Inattention. Then there is the chattering magpie, a great thief; busy whispering here and there, and humming and buzzing, a very destructive bird is this.

And who does not know the weedy fields? Boys and girls who have been carefully taught, and yet there came nothing but weeds. Those boys with the good seed sown in them, began to quarrel afterwards; so there came nettles and thorns instead of good fruit. This girl has the good seed in her heart, but she begins to think unkind thoughts, and perhaps to say spiteful things; so comes a prickly thistle instead of good seed. But notice that there is one part of the field that is quite clean. The corn is pushing up and all is promising a plentiful crop. We ask how this is. Listen to the farmer's answer. "I sent for as many boys and girls as I could get, and they came, and got on their knees, and pulled up the weeds, and cleared the ground. So there I shall have some good fruit." So boys and girls, let us set to pulling up weeds. We must ask God to help us, and he will. Let us get rid of the weeds, these nettles and thistles of ill temper; the inattention and the forgetting, and the things that come in the wrong place, —try to pull them up.—Mark Guy Pearse.

Begin Now to Hear Aright. It is in the spring that the farmers open up the soil and put the seed into the ground. It wouldn't do for them to wait till the very warm weather came to plant their seeds. If they did, they could not expect a heavy crop at the time of harvest. Jesus tells us that the seed he wants us to sow is the Word of God, that is, the love we are taught in the Bible, and the ground where we sow it is in our heart. He means that we are to read about him, and learn what he says, and then we are to obey him, to do what he did, and to be like him; but he says we must begin now if we are to have a full

crop at harvest. If boys and girls are to grow up into good men and women, they must begin early to follow Jesus and to try to be like him. And the harvest you will gather in will be all the good deeds you have done and the kind words you have spoken because you loved Jesus and tried to please him.—Robert Harvie.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: John 15.8.

"I gave thee of my seed to sow,
Bringest thou me my hundredfold?"
Can I look up with face aglow,
And answer, "Father, here is gold"?—Lowell.

The harvest of the future is but the golden ripening of today's sowing.—H. W. Mabie.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the parable of the Hidden Treasure. 2. Tell the parable of the Pearl of Great Price. 3. How did the man find the treasure? 4. How did the merchant find the wonderful pearl? 5. What was the treasure worth to the finder? 6. What was the Pearl of Great Price worth? 7. What is the Kingdom of Heaven worth? 8. Where is the Kingdom of Heaven?

Note-Book Work. The Junior Lesson Topic; the parable told in your own words; the lesson of the parable; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: WHEAT OR TARES? Or, HOW THE KINGDOM GROWS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. The beautiful stained glass windows in our churches we all admire. Bits of colored glass innumerable make lovely pictures—but you can't see through them. Most stories are like these windows, interesting in themselves, but they do not increase one's knowledge. Plain glass windows let the light in, and enable one to see the sky and the landscape—the Kingdom of Nature. The short stories which Jesus told are like the latter—they are windows through which we get light on the Kingdom of God. What do we call these short stories? Why?

Wheat or Tares? We might divide people into all sorts of classes—the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the workers and the idlers, the well and the sick, the happy and the sad. Jesus divides them in our parable into —what?

And these two classes of people, the good and the bad, are usually found side by side, in the same street, home, school, crowd, just as the wheat and the tares were found in the same field. Who are the good people, whence do they spring? They are the children of the Kingdom. Not merely people who are moral and respectable, but those who belong to the Kingdom of God. Whence do the evil people come? They are the children of the evil one, who love evil and practice it. Who are the good people? Jesus answers, "The seed sown by the Son of Man." Who are the bad? And he answers, "All things that cause stumbling and they that do iniquity."

And like the wheat and the tares which have a common likeness at first, though they have different roots, the good and the bad are so similar at first as to be indistinguishable. But what is taking place with them? Like the wheat and the tares they are developing in different directions—the one to good, the other to evil.

The tares and wheat receive the same gifts of sunshine and rain, and likewise do the good and the evil have the same chances to grow. Why does not God get rid of the evil at once? For fear of mistake—it is so difficult to tell which is which that the wrong ones might be destroyed. For the sake of the good—so as not to hurt or injure, for the evil have good friends and relatives. For the sake of the evil. Tares can't turn into wheat, but bad men may change and become good.

"On the window sills of a lawyer's suite in one of the skyscrapers of New York City I noticed one day strange boxes of growing things. Boxes of gravel, boxes of ashes, boxes of common sea-sand, and thriving in such unorthodox soil various familiar plants and grains. And my friend showed me, in bottles and cans, a simple fertilizing element which can coax harvests to grow on sand dunes and may yet make the desert fulfill Isaiah's glowing dream. In the soil of every human life you will find a similar element. It is the Almighty's deposit in

man, and in every man. Granting such secret and mysterious fertilization from God, how shall we ever think to find men utterly Godless? Practically Godless, yes; denying daily their high parentage in heaven, yet never altogether irreligious, and anon breaking into bloom in the strangest, most startling fashion."

The parable tells us that the fate of the good and the bad is wholly different, that in the end each receives what he merits.

"Lord of Harvest, grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be."

What the Twelve Disciples Learned by the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Jesus left the sea and the crowds and went to his home in Capernaum. The disciples followed and asked him to explain the parable of the Tares. The Sower of the good seed is the Son of man, he said: and the disciples gained a new thought about their Master. The field is the world: but this thought of his world-power they did not then grasp. The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom and the tares are the sons of the evil one: and the disciples must have asked themselves which were they. The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil: and then they understood better why their Master's work of sowing good seed progressed so slowly. At the time of harvest—the time of judgment—the workers of iniquity shall be punished and the righteous rewarded in the Kingdom of the Father: and they learned that judgment is the Lord's part, forbearance, man's; and they learned, too, why Jesus that very morning had allowed himself to be insulted and had let the matter pass with a solemn word of warning. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," added Jesus to them: and they realized that they, too, were in need of warning.

How the Kingdom Grows. The parable of the Mustard Seed shows that Jesus had a wonderful faith in the ultimate success of his work although the results then appeared small. With only a little group of men for his disciples, he could entrust his cause to them and look forward confidently to the time when it should conquer the earth.

And what has been the progress of the Kingdom since Jesus uttered this parable? At the end of the second century there were two million professing Christians; at the end of the tenth century, fifty millions; at the end of the fifteenth century, one hundred millions; at the end of the eighteenth century, two hundred millions; at the end of the nineteenth century, five hundred millions. The Kingdom will indeed spread like a great tree until it overshadows the earth.

The Spread of Christianity. There is an Arabian story that in a small walnut shell was hidden a diminutive fairy tent, which was carried by a young prince to his father. At first they placed it in the council chamber, and it grew till it spread its covering over the king and his senators. Then they carried it to the courtyard, and it soon covered king and ministers, family and servants, and all the household. Next they took it to the plain, where the mighty army was encamped, and it speedily spread out its canopy over the far-extending host. It was flexible to every need and expansive to every requirement.

That was a fable, but this is a fact. Christianity came to men in the contracted shell of Judaism, but has spread and expanded, and is still capable of an expansiveness, broad and deep and high as the growing needs of a growing race, and Christ will not be satisfied until its canopy of love is spread over a redeemed humanity and shall weld into a living, loving unity, the great family of man.—Unknown.

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Grain of Mustard Seed. Thirteen hundred years ago Colomba and a dozen companions sailed from Ireland in a frail little skin-covered boat for Scotland. They landed in Iona, and built a tiny Christian temple there. That was the beginning of Christianity in Scotland. The Kingdom of God was a grain of mustard seed. But from Iona, Colomba and his companions went and preached to the dwellers on the mainland, to the Picts with their painted faces, to the Druids in their groves. And modern Scotland, with its innumerable houses of prayer and its wide-spread religion, is the result. The mustard seed has grown into a tree.

Four hundred years ago the seed of the Gospel found a lodging in the heart of Martin Luther. It was a case of the mustard seed in those days, when Luther, a humble and unknown monk, travailed in soul. But from Martin

Luther and his spiritual conflicts the Protestantism of half Europe and America and Australia has sprung. The grain of mustard seed has become a great tree.

A hundred and fifty years ago John Wesley's heart was "strangely warmed," in the little meeting-house in Aldersgate Street. The Kingdom of God in this case was like a grain of mustard seed. The great world never knew that anything extraordinary had happened. But from the experience sprang the great Evangelical Revival and the Methodist Church of today. The grain of mustard seed has become a great tree.

A little over a hundred years ago William Carey's soul was filled with concern about the heathen. He was a man of no great position and of little influence. Even his brother ministers pooh-poohed William Carey and his notion of converting the heathen. The Kingdom of God was like a grain of mustard seed. But from that passion in William Carey's heart the whole modern missionary enterprise has sprung. The Northampton cobbler poring over his map of the world, that is the grain of mustard seed. The noble army of missionaries who have gone forth to plant in every land the banner of the Cross, the immense and incalculable work of missions in well nigh every quarter of the globe, that is the great tree.—Dr. J. D. Jones, in the Gospel According to St. Mark.

The Meaning of the Parable of the Leaven. The breadmaker mixed the leaven in her mass of dough until every particle of it was changed. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? questioned Paul of the Corinthians. Each particle of leaven affects the particles next to it, these the next, and so on until the whole mass is permeated with the fermenting power, and the heavy lumps of dough have been changed into light loaves of bread ready for baking. Like the power of that leaven is the power of Christianity. The influence of the Christ spirit affects the whole life, transforming motives and character, and changes the whole world.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The Lord knoweth them that are his; but we—we are left to judge by uncertain signs, so that we may learn to exercise hope and faith toward one another.—George Eliot.

Sow with a generous hand;
Pause not for toil or pain;
Weary not through the heat of summer,
Weary not through the cold spring rain;
But wait till the autumn cometh
For the sheaves of golden grain.—A. A. Proctor.

Be vigilant: the weeds can get the upper hand in your mind as easily as they can in your garden.—Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. About when was the Gospel of Matthew written? 2. What common lesson do the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price teach? 3. What is the difference in the thought of the two parables? 4. Was it common to find buried treasure in Palestine? 5. What is the Pearl of Great Price? 6. Whom did Jesus advise to sell all that he had in order to enter the Kingdom? (Mt. 19.21.) 7. Which of the parables is a parable of judgment? 8. Describe the way in which the net was used. 9. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Net?

Note-Book Work. How the Kingdom Grows.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM

Lesson Material: Matthew 13.24-34; 2 Peter 3.8.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. One of the most striking facts about the Kingdom of God, as described by Jesus, is that it is like so many things. It is like a sower and like a field; it is like a fisherman with his nets and like a merchant with his pearls; it is like things that are near and things that are far away; it is to come in glory and it is to come without observation. All that Jesus sees is suggestive to him of his comprehensive vision of the Kingdom. All that helps the world will help the Kingdom. All sorts of talents and types contribute to a realization of the better world.

Yet in this series of pictures there sometimes appears to be a certain orderliness and sequence. Having used one figure of speech, Jesus seems to look for another which may amplify or enrich his thought. The Kingdom, for instance,

in this passage, is to be like a great tree, in which the birds of the air will lodge; and again, the Kingdom is to be like the leaven, which will leaven the whole lump. Both of these figures illustrate the principle of growth and expansion. The tree puts out its branches above, the leaven spreads from within. It is not impossible, however, that this sequence of ideas discloses to us the mind of Jesus as it penetrates to the deeper meaning of his message. The first way of growth may have seemed to him to make an insufficient picture until the second conception of the Kingdom is superadded. The Kingdom will indeed spread like a great tree until it overshadows all the world; but, he goes on, it will not spread as a tree until it expands as leaven, and the external and visible Kingdom will wait until the spiritual and invisible Kingdom has been realized within the heart.

Of course, we cannot be sure that such a sequence of illustrations was designed to be significant, but it certainly indicates a truth which the present age much needs to learn. When people in our time are looking for a better world, they are tempted to look for it as for the growth of a tree, by the way of outward expansion, multiplication of branches, complexity of organization; as though the Kingdom were to come by simple increase of mass. The fact is, however, that the Kingdom cannot come as a tree until it has worked as leaven, quietly and silently, penetrating from the motives and ideals of the few into the lives of the many. "A golden age," Mr. Spencer once said, "cannot be made from leaden instincts." A better world must be created by better men. After the parable of the leaven is fulfilled, and the self-effacing, unassuming, consecrated life has permeated the social mass, then may follow the parable of the great tree, and the community, or the nation, may become at last the Kingdom of God.—Dr. Francis G. Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

A Familiar Picture. The ideal of character is pure virtue. The ideal of society is universal righteousness. The ideal of religion is good unmixed with ill. But where, among men, can these be found? Utopia exists only in the poetic imagination. The perfect society is a dream yet unrealized. The practical experience of every-day life on earth always reveals the evil in closest fellowship with the good. As we never find pure gold in masses, but in minutest grains mingled with sand or scattered through the worthless rock, and as the wheat comes to us encased in chaff, so your church has its faithless disciples, your society has its corruptibles, your family has its "black sheep." In short, wherever the Son of man sows the good seed of righteousness, the devil is pretty sure to get in some tares of evil. Even among our Lord's apostles one was a Judas.—George Henry Hubbard.

The Lesson of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. This parable does not encourage complacency in the presence of evil. The man might be compelled to sow his seed in a field where tares would grow but he could go to his work with clean hands and a pure heart carrying nothing but good seed. He might be compelled to unite with an imperfect church—there is no other sort—but he could at least strive to raise the average of right living in that group. The willingness to let tares grow with the wheat did not spring from any leniency toward noxious weeds—they simply could not be rooted out as yet without imperiling the life of the wheat.

"The field is the world," Jesus said. The place where the good seed of religious truth is to be put down beneath the surface and made to grow is not some holy corner in this life of ours fenced off and walled in from the rest of this common earth. The world where men buy and sell, employ and are employed, struggle, sin, suffer and die, this is the sphere of action for real religion. "The field is the world," for this wider range of human interest is the only area which can furnish adequate material for that full development of the type of religious growth the Master had in mind. And in this vast complexity of interest and action the good and the bad elements are bewilderingly mingled.

"Let both grow together until the harvest!" It is impossible either by rigorous ecclesiastical discipline or by drastic legal reforms to purge the church and the state of those hindering and hurtful growths which militate against an abundant harvest. Let both grow together, not because we are indifferent to the evil growth, but because the instant destruction of it would imperil valued interests. The fire-brands more intent on burning the tares before the hour has come for that judgment than upon raising wheat become themselves the enemies of the harvest. The odium of carrying a certain measure of unsound teaching

in the church or a certain measure of unconsecrated adherents or even the burden of unworthy practice on the part of some is an evil less serious than would be the loss which would result from an effort to immediately cast out all that is unworthy. Let both grow—there is a wise patience which is both humane and statesmanlike.

But this entanglement of good and evil is not to be permanent. The day of separation which God has within his own power and purpose is on the way. In the consummation of the age the things which offend shall be removed.

The main lessons of the parable then are these: the inevitable mingling of varied qualities in those agencies which make for betterment; the ineradicable distinction to be kept clear between the good and the evil; the utter abhorrence of evil in one's heart or in the world, unmodified by any sort of complacency, as being the work of "an enemy"; the necessity for wise and discriminating patience in waiting for the elimination of the evil that the very life of the organism on which it has fastened may not be imperiled; and the habit of cordial appreciation which constantly regards the growth of the good as being the significant fact in the field, yielding that healthy optimism which serves as the herald of a gracious harvest.

Alas for those who can see the tares in the wheat field and not see the wheat! There are mudholes in Yosemite Valley and there are rattlesnakes and skunks. But in the presence of El Capitan and Vernal Falls the healthy mind does not dwell upon the disagreeable and the unsavory. It is a small nature which habitually bestows its interest and remark upon the present defects in the process, never catching the vision of that great consummation toward which the moral order moves.—Condensed from The Master's Way, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

The Conservation of Christian Character. Take the matter of individual character. A soul awakens to the consciousness of its divine nature, of its spiritual possibilities. Aspirations towards the Christian life are kindled. But there are unchristianly habits and tempers. What shall be done with these? "Root them up," "Cast them out," says the teacher of moral philosophy; and often he does this in the name of the gospel. Straightway the evils are made the object of a vigorous attack. How many there are who, having struggled earnestly against some evil habit and been defeated, have become discouraged, and the very aspirations towards righteousness that had begun to form themselves in the soul have been uptorn and destroyed! How many, too, of stronger will have conquered in the fight, but have so exhausted their time and strength in the warfare that they have accomplished nothing else! Such a life is like a garden in which the gardener has so busied himself with keeping out the weeds that he has had no time to raise any fruit.

Let every power of body and mind be fully occupied with active service for Christ. Fill time and strength with the good, and the evil will be crowded out. Human life is like a field of limited area. Fill it with activity of one kind and it cannot contain more. Let streams of good thoughts and good deeds flow in on every side, and all evil will of necessity be driven out.—Condensed from the Teachings of Jesus in Parables, by George Henry Hubbard.

The Seed Has Become a Great Tree. One hundred years ago there was just one man in China—Robert Morrison—sowing the seed of the Word of God. Of the four hundred fifty millions of Chinese, he had gained just one convert, his servant.

Fifty years ago there were only five cities in all that great land open to the missionaries. Today there is not even one village where the gospel may not be preached, and marvelous have been the results of that first seed sowing.

The Power of Leaven. There are 1,500,000,000 people inhabiting this earth of ours: Only 500,000,000, or one-third, are even classified as Christians. Of that third, I doubt whether, on any given Sunday, there are 100,000,000, which would be a fifth, who attend divine worship or Sunday-school. Of those who do attend, I would ask how many have made it a practice in the previous week to pray and study the Bible? Would it be one in four? This proportion would reduce the number of instructed and devotional Christians to 25,000,000, or one in sixty of the human race. The harvest is still plenteous while the laborers are still few. A mere handful of disciples today receive from Christ the bread of life and distribute it to the multitudes. The church is still a pioneer—a little handful of brave men and women, without much room in the inn.

But the army so small is not contemptible. What interested our Lord about

leaven was that so little of it leavened the whole lump. It was just an upper room full of Galileans who turned the Roman Empire upside down. Even Sodom could have been saved by ten righteous men. What we need today is a willing change among men from nominal to actual discipleship. Take the people who do attend church and teach them their value if they would be whole-hearted.—P. Whitwell Wilson, in the Continent.

The Slowness and the Swiftness of God. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, 2 Peter 3.8. Thus the apostle calls on believers to school themselves to patience and to hope. He brings before them the thought of God's eternity. His argument is that we are not to judge God as we judge men. He is not subject to times and seasons. His thoughts and purposes are above ours as heaven is above the earth. He is not under the same category of time, and so his purposes are not under the same limitation.

The slowness of God in history, how pathetic it appears to us sometimes! A thousand years, and we have only crept forward a painful inch. A thousand years, and it might have been only a day for all that we have gained. A thousand years the race groans and travails upward, and this is all we have to show for the tears and the blood! A thousand years, and the Kingdom of God seems still a phantom and the City of God seems still a city of dreams.

But hush! Is such impatience much removed from the scoffer's taunt? It is because God's purpose is so great and so deep that it seems so slow. And one thing is sure, whether we ever get a satisfactory philosophy of history or not, one thing is sure, that there is meant for us in all this a vast opportunity, a great spiritual lesson, an education in faith. This is the personal side of it.

"*Patiens quia eternus*," the motto of the Society of Jesus, may well be a motto of the Church. Patient because eternal; the future is with her; the living seed is in her heart and will come to its full blossom and fruit. She never misses the conflict in the long years of her strife, but she never misses the victory.

But that is only one side after all. The apostle completes the thought by showing that God's eternity carries with it the complimentary thought of the swiftness of God. One day may be as productive of great results as a millennium. The spiritual is not conditioned by time limits. Nations may be born in a day. The wind bloweth where it listeth. The way of God is the way of the wind. A long process ends often in some swift climax. The centuries culminate in a point of time. Faithless and slow of heart to believe, we limit the Spirit of God. We study stages and processes and outward signs and conditions, and forget the vital force which is ever ready for the miracle of new life. Through the long days of winter the earth is as iron, and through many days of spring there is no sign of anything new, no sign of the great awakening, till there is one day which is the birth of spring, one day when the whole world changes. Lift up your hearts in glad confidence, ye that love the Lord. Who knows at what turn of the road the towers of the city will come into sight. Who knows when the blessed Day shall dawn which shall be for grace, and spiritual fruit as a thousand years?—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. Hugh Black.

Suggestions for Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Whence then hath it tares? We waste a great deal of time and strength in seeking for an answer to the question. A child displays some unlovely trait, and, instead of giving our individual attention to the work of correcting the evil, we begin to ask, "From whom did he take it?" It may be interesting from a scientific standpoint to know that this habit was inherited from one's grandfather and that unchristianly spirit from a long forgotten great-aunt; but is it not unspeakably more important to know how the bad habit may be cured or the evil spirit exorcised? Heredity is made the scapegoat for all manner of shortcomings and iniquities. Because of it parents excuse the inexcusable faults of their children and their own indolent neglect to correct those faults.—George Henry Hubbard.

2. The growth of character. See the Teachings of Jesus in Parables, by George Henry Hubbard; Chapter LIII of The Master's Way, by Dean Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. When was Matthew's Gospel written? 2. What does Irenæus say about the date? 3. Why did Jesus give two parables so similar in meaning as those of the Hidden Treasure and of the Pearl of Great Price? 4. What parable resembles in its teaching that of the parable of the Net? 5. How do these two parables differ in their emphasis of the same truth?

15-0

LESSON XI—DECEMBER 12

WHAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE

Golden Text

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14.17

LESSON Matthew 13.44-58 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 62.6-12

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Mark 4.26-32; Luke 13.18-21

MATTHEW 13.44 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: 46 and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

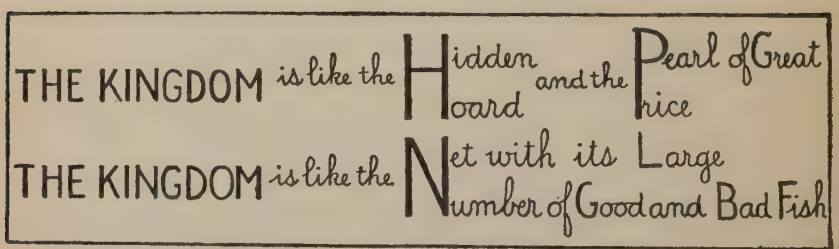
47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. 49 So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

51 Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea. 52 And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

53 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD


THE KINGDOM is like the Hidden Hoard and the Pearl of Great Price
THE KINGDOM is like the Net with its Large Number of Good and Bad Fish

I. THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE, verse 44. In this parable Jesus likens the Kingdom of heaven to a treasure hidden in the field: in his joy at finding it a man will hide it again and then sell all that he has and buy the field. In the interpretation of the parable, the selling and buying means that the finder gives up everything that prevents his whole-hearted enjoyment of the treasure, the Christ.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, verses 45, 46. The lesson of this parable differs from that of the former, only in that the prize instead of being found as a surprise, is found only after diligent seeking. "It was natural for a Jewish teacher to give two illustrations of the same truth," says Dr. Broadus, "since the more elevated Hebrew style tends always to parallelisms."

III. THE PARABLE OF THE NET, verses 47-50. This parable is a companion one to that of the Tares, with the difference that in the latter the emphasis is upon what should be done in this life, while here the emphasis is upon what will be done in the future life. Possibly Matthew narrated this parable last

in order to close the series with the picture of the judgment. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. "This was an oblong net of immense length, employed near the shore. The bottom edge was weighted with lead, and swept the bottom of the sea. The upper edge floated on the surface of the sea, supported by corks. Escape from it was impossible, and when it was dragged to shore, it contained every fish in the area of the sea which it had swept."

IV. THE APPLICATION TO THE DISCIPLES, verses 51, 52. Very readily the disciples answered *Yea* to Jesus' question if they had understood his parable. "How Jesus must have smiled, inwardly if not outwardly, at their simplicity! They had learned the alphabet and were trying to pronounce words of one syllable in the language of the Kingdom. But the deeper meaning and the richer content of that life abundant and eternal to which he would introduce them lay ahead as an undiscovered country. *Therefore*—since you have understood, as you say, continued Jesus, you will have no difficulty in understanding this, that *every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.* "The Kingdom of Heaven is here personified. It is viewed as the teacher, and, just as young men who desired to be scribes resorted to the Scribal College, and sat at the feet of the rabbis, so the Christian scribe must go to school to the Kingdom of Heaven and receive its instruction. And this means that he must sit at Jesus' feet (compare Lk. 10) learn his method, and catch his spirit. Jesus had begun to teach by parables. It was a new method with him, but it was by no means original. It had been much employed by the ancient prophets, and the rabbis were very fond of it. But Jesus' teaching hitherto had been absolutely unique, amazing all who had heard it, and impressing them with a sense of its authority (Mt. 7.28, 29.) And there was this danger in the teaching by parable that the familiarity of the method might conceal the originality of the message. Jesus knew what his disciples were thinking when he inquired, 'Have ye taken in all these things?' 'Yes,' they replied, their glibness betraying how imperfectly they had comprehended what they had heard. On this account he said, 'Every scribe that hath been made a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who bringeth forth from his store things new and old'"(David Smith).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A treasure hidden in the field.....a merchant seeking goodly pearls, verses 44, 45. In these parables our Lord utilizes two very familiar facts of old-world life, both of them arising from similar causes. In the days when there were no banks and no limited liability companies, it was difficult for a man to know what to do with his little savings. The old time government meant oppression, and it was dangerous to seem to have any riches. In old days war stalked over the land, and men's property must be portable or else concealed. So, on the one hand we find the practice of hiding away little hoards in some suitable place, beneath a rock, in the cleft of a tree, or a hole dug in the ground. Or, a man might prefer to carry his wealth about with him. So he bought jewels, easily carried and not easily noticed, and easily convertible into what he might require. —Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

A man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls, verse 45. Both in ancient times and in the Orient to this day the search of a merchant for goodly pearls is one which commonly entails much personal hardship and danger. Whether on the shores of the Red Sea or of the Persian Gulf, where the pearls are obtained from the fishermen, those regions have always had an evil repute for the character of their inhabitants. Even in Bagdad or in Damascus, the life of a man known to be carrying a pearl of great price about him would not be safe for an hour. Often, therefore, these possessors of costly pearls disguise themselves, and accompany caravans as poor beggars or pilgrims, while they may have secreted in their bosoms more than would buy all the goods of their companions. We need not wonder, therefore, that the man himself becomes an enthusiast over the preciousness of the treasure.—W. H. Thomson, in The Parables by the Lake.

One pearl of great price, verse 46. In all ages the pearl really possessing the purest tints outranks in costliness all except a very few diamonds. Julius

Cæsar gave one such to Servilia, the sister of Cato, for which he paid a sum equal to $223,000 of our money. The famous pearl which Cleopatra dissolved at a feast, and then drank to the health of Mark Antony, was one of a pair set in earrings, and said to be worth $400,000 of our money when the purchasing power of money was ten or fifteen times as great as now.—Harper's Classical Dictionary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What is the lesson of each parable we have studied? Why did Jesus make use of parables?

The Parables of the Kingdom. The first in the group of parables given by Matthew as uttered by the Sea of Galilee, that of the Sower, shows the different reception of the Word by its hearers, and the second, that of the Tares, shows the intermingling of the good and the bad in human society; both emphasize the number of those without the Kingdom of Heaven, and would naturally tend to dishearten the disciples. The next two parables, that of the Mustard Seed and that of the Leaven, show the vital, transforming force inherent in the kingdom that shall work its ultimate expansion; they would tend to encourage the disciples. The third pair of parables, that of the Hidden Treasure and that of the Pearl of Great Price then followed. These show the supreme value of the kingdom, and must have been an incentive to the disciples to "covet earnestly the best gifts." The parable of the Net, which closes this series of parables, is a companion to that of the Tares, and emphasizes the fact of judgment with reward or punishment: it must have been to the disciples a most solemn warning.

Assign paragraphs 157, 85-87, In the Master's country.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

We find these Parables of the Kingdom coming in pairs. They are rights and lefts, fitting neatly upon a common body of truth. They supplement each other in the varying accent given to particular aspects of the truth.

The wise teacher treats his utterance as sailors treat their boats. He makes his presentation trim by loading it on both sides. The single strong statement standing out of all relation to cognate truths becomes oftentimes dangerous and misleading. The crank, the bigot or the fanatic is developed by having one tremendous truth plumped on one side of his little craft. He is not properly stocked and balanced; he is not rounded out by other truths, and the one big idea he carries capsizes him. The parallelism and the antithesis of Scripture, the whole habit of supplementing the one idea by its mate adds to the impressiveness and to the effectiveness of the truth thus presented.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Master's Way.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: SHORT STORIES THAT JESUS TOLD

Note. In some denominations the lesson studied today is "Jesus Feeding Five Thousand People"—the lesson assigned by our Committee for next week—in order that next week the alternate Christmas lesson may be studied. The Feeding of the Five Thousand will be found treated for Juniors on page 470.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Jesus told many short stories, or parables, whose lessons for the heart are about the Kingdom of Heaven. In each of these stories he tells us what the Kingdom is like.

Where and What is the Kingdom of God? Geography tells us where to find places. Where is the Kingdom of God? A boy says, "It is in heaven." No; it is not in heaven. Another boy says, "It is in the Bible." No; it is not in the Bible. Another boy says, "It must be in the Church." No; it is not in the Church. Heaven is only the *capital* of the Kingdom of God; the Bible is the Guide-book to it; the Church is the weekly parade of those who belong to it. If you will turn to the Seventeenth Chapter of Luke you will find out where the Kingdom of God really is. "The Kingdom of God is within you"—within *you*. The Kingdom of God is inside people.

What is the Kingdom of God? Every Kingdom has its exports, its products. Go down to the river here, and you will find ships with tea; you know they are

from China. Ships with wool; you know they came from Australia. Ships with sugar; you know they came from Java. What comes from the Kingdom of God? Again we must refer to our Guide-book. Turn to Romans, and we shall find what the Kingdom of God is. "The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, joy." Righteousness, of course, is just doing what is right. Any boy who does what is right has the Kingdom of God within him. Any boy who, instead of being quarrelsome, lives at peace with the other boys, has the Kingdom of God within him.

The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of brothers. It is a great Society, founded by Christ, of all the people who try to live like him, and make the world better and sweeter and happier. Whenever a boy is trying to do that, in the house or in the street, in the workshop or on the foot ball field, there is the Kingdom of God.—Henry Drummond, in an Address to the Boys' Brigade in Glasgow.

Our First Short Story. Here the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus says, is like a treasure hidden in the field. It is of very great value, then. A man came upon it by chance. He was digging over the field, perhaps to make a garden, or perhaps he was digging out the foundations of a house. Suddenly he came upon the treasure. What did he do with it? First, he hid it again. In England it used to be the law that treasure-trove like this was the property of the Crown. We do not know what was the law of the country where this man of the parable lived, but evidently "findings" were not "keepings." In order to get the treasure he must own the field. So what did he do?

Now Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto that treasure, and we know that by the Kingdom of God is meant God's rule in our hearts. So what is the lesson of this story? That to obey God is so important that we must sell something to become his obedient children, that we must give up our self-rule, whatever in our life is wrong, in order to follow his will, and gain a happiness deeper and more lasting than any earthly treasure can give us.

Another Short Story. What is the Kingdom like in the parable of the Pearl of Great Price? Like the man who found the treasure, the merchant sold all he had to possess it, so this story, like the former, tells us how very valuable is the possession of the Kingdom.

Do you ever hear the expression, "You paid too much for your whistle"? What does it mean? Do you know how it originated? When Benjamin Franklin was a small boy his friends filled his pockets with coppers and he went out to spend them. The first thing he saw in a toy shop was a wooden whistle; he wanted it very much, and he offered the man in the shop all he had for it. The man took the money and gave him the whistle. Benjamin blew the whistle all the morning and then got tired of it, and all the afternoon he thought of other toys he would rather have had of which he would not have tired so soon. Benjamin Franklin paid too much for his whistle, he made a bad bargain, he gave up what was worth something for what was worth little. Jesus teaches in his parable of the Pearl of Great Price how to make a good bargain, to give up something that is worth much for something that is worth far more, something that will give joy and satisfaction as long as he lives. The wonderful pearl is the knowledge of Christ which leads one to do Christ-like deeds.

One who was Willing to Pay the Price for the Pearl. While I was living at Amp'ing in 1893, I became acquainted with a native doctor and drugseller named Tsen. From the first time he heard the gospel he was deeply interested in it, and at once began to close his shop on the Lord's Day. Every morning and evening he joined the Christians in worship, for he thought it too long to wait till the next "worship day" came around. Finally I put the test to him: "If you really believe in Jesus as your Savior you should take your picture image of the goddess of mercy down from your shop and burn it." I knew that such a decided stand for Christ would at once call forth bitter persecutions. I can never forget his answer. "I have been seeking a Savior for forty years and now that I have found one do you think that I cannot suffer for him?" (I have since found out that his words were quite true, he had been going about from temple to temple to heap up merit for the next life, in his blind, groping way he had been seeking a Savior for forty years.) He went home and at once took down the paper idol and burned it. Heavy and subtle persecutions immediately broke out against him and for a time he lost all peace and quietness in

this world, yet the God of Peace reigned in his heart through it all and kept him steadfast.—Mrs. Cecil-Smith of the China Inland Mission.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verses: Matthew 13.45, 46.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.—Jesus.

Where God is King, there is the Kingdom of God.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was it Jesus heard, verse 13? (Mt. 14.1-12.) 2. What lake did Jesus and his disciples cross? 3. What words of the lesson show us that the word *desert,* verse 15, cannot mean what it now means to us? 4. What do you think it may mean? 5. Who had the loaves and fishes, as we learn from Jn. 6.9? 6. How is our food God's gift? 7. Is there food enough in the world for everyone? 8. In order that no one may hunger, what must those do who have abundance?

Note-Book Work. XI. The Junior Lesson Topic; three stories told by Jesus; two truths which the stories teach; a Sentence Sermon.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE JOY OF FINDING THE KINGDOM Or, WHAT THE KINGDOM IS LIKE

Lesson Material: Matthew 13.44-52.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Some one has said that entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is looked upon by many as entrance into a fortified town is viewed by the rural population; it may be necessary in a time of danger, but they think with longing of the fields they must abandon, and it is from constraint, not from love, that they make the change. Jesus taught that membership in the Kingdom is of such supreme importance that one should willingly sacrifice everything for its sake. What do we call the parables by which he taught these truths?

Two Ways of Finding the Kingdom. The parables of the Hidden Treasure and of the Pearl of Great Price are alike in their valuation of the treasure, that it is worth all one possesses, but they differ in the way in which the treasure is discovered. In the one case it is found, seemingly by accident; in the other it is secured only after long search. And in these two ways one may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, become a subject of the King, obedient to his will, that Kingdom which Christ came to found upon earth.

The First Way. The rustic had probably plodded across the field a hundred times and was doing it for the hundred and first time, or perhaps was at work there with his mattock or his homely plough. And, perchance, some stroke of the spade, or push of the coulter, went a little deeper than usual, and there flashed the gold; or some shower of rain came on, and washed away a little of the superincumbent soil, and laid bare the bag. Now, that is what often happens, for you have to remember that though you are not seeking God, God is always seeking you, and so the great saying comes to be true, "I am found of them that sought me not." There have been many cases like the one of the man who, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, with no thought in his mind except to bind the disciples and bring them captive to Jerusalem, saw suddenly a light from heaven flashing down upon him, and a Voice that pulled him up in the midst of his career. Ah! it would be an awful thing if no one found Christ except those who set out to seek for him. Like the showers upon the grass "that tarry not for man, nor wait for the sons of men," he often comes to hearts that are thinking about nothing less than about him.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

When Wendell Phillips was asked how he had found God, he replied: When I was a boy of fourteen years of age, in the old church at the North End, I heard Lyman Beecher preach on the theme, "You belong to God." I went home after that service, threw myself on the floor in my room, with locked doors, and prayed: "O God, I belong to thee. Take what is thine own. I ask this, that whenever a thing is wrong, it may have no power of temptation over me, and that whenever a thing is right it may take no courage to do it." Thus he entered the Kingdom.

One day a girl of sixteen sat reading the life of a noble Christian woman. "That was a beautiful life," she said to herself as she finished the book. "And I should like to live such a life," she added, after further thought. "Lord, I

will try from this time onward," was her prayer a few moments later. She had entered the Kingdom.

The Second Way. Kil, even at the early age of ten, realized that the world was unsatisfying. At school he was continually looking for some new doctrine, listening eagerly to the conversation of teachers and occasional visitors in the hope that some helpful new teaching would be revealed. At seventeen, still seeking, he went into business in Pyeng Yang, at the same time studying medicine. While going about the country as a merchant he was reminded of an old Korean belief that some time a great teacher would appear. Then he began seeking for this great teacher. He found a man who recommended Buddhism, and for seven years Kil earnestly sought the light. He took a book of Buddhist prayers to a solitary place in the mountains to study. Each year he gave up his business and spent from twenty to a hundred days in that solitary spot, seeking the Truth.

Finally, a comrade told him of Pastor Moffet, who was preaching a doctrine which told of a good place to go to after death. He did not think much of this new doctrine, but nevertheless took the pains to seek out Dr. Moffet and inquire concerning it. Dr. Moffet told him of Christ and gave him the New Testament. Still holding on to Buddhism, he read the New Testament and Pilgrim's Progress. Then he began to pray to God and one night he was awakened with a sense of the certainty of salvation through Christ. Then he realized that in all his years of seeking and following after Buddha he was like a man trying to climb a precipice by a rotten rope. Following his acceptance of Christ as a personal Savior, he gave up everything else in the joy of salvation and the longing to tell others of it. He was so zealous that he even accosted people on the streets and told them of the Savior. He gave up his business and went to preaching and is today acknowledged to be the foremost Korean pastor, and is loved and honored by the Christian Church throughout Korea.—Condensed from a chapter in Korea for Christ, by G. T. B. Davis.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Do you expect that religion is so cheap that without giving time you can find fellowship with God? You cannot; this pearl is worth everything.—Andrew Murray.

Yet sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal right;
And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was Matthew's aim in writing his Gospel? 2. How long did Jesus teach and help the people one day? 3. What had he hoped to do that day instead? 4. How did he always meet interruptions? (As opportunities.) 5. Why did the disciples want the crowd fed? 6. Who had the five loaves and two fishes? (Jn. 6.9.) 7. Why were the twelve baskets of fragments saved? 8. Have Jesus' words to the disciples in our Golden Text any appeal to us? 9. What is our nation doing to help feed the hunger of the world? 10. What is our church doing? 11. Our class? 12. What are you doing?

Note-Book Work. XI. Further Lesson Truths which Jesus Taught about the Kingdom.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE SUPREME VALUE OF THE KINGDOM

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. In the Parable of the Soil, the diligent effort of the same sower of the same good seed achieves varying results because of the varying character of the soil—hard, shallow, weedy or promising. This brings out the power of environment as it registers its effect upon the best of efforts. Then the story of the Tares, the parable of the life principle, where two life qualities were cast into the same soil with varying results, balances the former by indicating the vital importance of the inner life quality in determining the harvest.

The grain of mustard seed growing into a splendid plant, with roots, branches, leaves, all organized into a common life, indicates the progress achieved by those visible, tangible efforts put forth in organized fashion for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Then to supplement that teaching in the minds of those who look too much on the outward appearance and not enough on the subtle

forces at work beneath the surface, the parable of the Leaven brings out in bold relief the mighty influence of those silent, permeative energies which work by spiritual contagion to the same high end.

Here is this story of the Pearl of Great Price we find a merchantman whose business it was to buy and to sell pearls. He found in the regular employ of his trade and in the terms of his own daily pursuits that which had supreme worth warranting him in making total investment in it. He represents the men who in the immediate line of their employment come upon those spiritual values which stand supreme. They are able to construe in terms of that which is altogether common and familiar that quality of character here symbolized by the pearl of great price.

But in view of the fact that not all the toilers of earth are so happily situated, Jesus portrayed the finding of that supreme value in life by another picture. There was a man who found his treasure hidden in a field where the sheep were grazing, the poppies were in bloom, and the children were at play. This was not in the line of his usual employment or interest—it was indeed a "find." But it likewise represented to him the highest value in life and he sold all that he had and invested it in that field that he might possess the treasure. That quality of life which holds such worth as to warrant the investment of one's total energy may not lie for every man immediately in the line of his customary activity.—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Master's Way.

Every One's Supreme Concern. The hour cometh and now is when all that any man is worth is the good he has done and the character he has won. The character and the service of the individual life are for each soul the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price. It matters not what Bradstreet says; it matters not what the headlines in newspapers may announce; it matters not though the Chamber of Commerce may adjourn for an hour and the flags fly at half-mast on all the public buildings—all the man is worth is the good he has done and the character he has won. Therefore do good and give alms. Provide bags which wax not old. Lay up treasures which fail not.

"Covet earnestly the best!" It lies below the surface, even as the hid treasure was deep buried underneath the smooth slope where the grass grew and the cattle grazed. If you would possess the values which are supreme you will need to touch life at its deeper levels, uncovering those profounder sources of motives, stimulus and spiritual supply. The hid treasure of the soul is only available for those who are willing to dig deep and invest their all.

There is only one possession in this world in which a man's tenure is absolutely sure—no man is ever compelled to part with himself. If he gives his best strength to the accumulation of an abundance of things, he may hear the summons at any moment, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee—then whose shall those things be?" Whose indeed! In that hour he has nothing to take with him but his own qualities of mind and heart, his own accumulation of character and his own record of Christian service. And that fact becomes either his highest reward or his sorest penalty, for no man can be good company for himself permanently unless he is a Christian. He needs the peace and the promise of Christian faith.—Condensed from The Master's Way, by Charles Reynolds Brown.

Seeking the Best. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls."

This sentence gives us one great characteristic of the kingly life, for the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Heaven are the kingly men and women. And the kingly life is a life in quest of big things. Everyone is painfully familiar with the temptation to fritter away life in interests that are small and mean. There are many Scriptural types of the wasteful and belittled life. There are those who spend their strength in seeking money. The concentrated purpose of their days is a quest for gold. They are zealous for artificial gems and they miss the goodly pearls.

Now the big things of life belong to the realm of spirit and character. It is in the region of the soul that we find the pearls. The really goodly things, the big things, are inside, not outside, the man. The big thing is not luxury, but contentment; not a big house, but a big satisfaction; not accumulated art treasures, but a fine, artistic appreciation; not a big library, but a serene studiousness; not a big estate, but a large vision. The big things are not "the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen." "Seek peace and ensue it." "Seek the

things that are above." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." Such are the goodly pearls.

But the quest of the kingly man is not only for the big things—it is for the bigger things among the big, and for the biggest among them all. There are gradations of value even among good things. There are pearls and better pearls, and the true king in life is known by his pursuit of the best. Knowledge is a good thing, the mastery of the secrets of the visible world; wisdom is a better thing, the possession of fine judgment and delicate intuition, of moral and spiritual discernment. Acquaintance is a good thing; friendship is a better thing; love is the best thing. The respect of others is a good thing; self-respect is a better thing; a fine, untroubled conscience is the best thing. There are pearls and there are pearls of great price. And so this, I say, is a mark of the children of the Kingdom. They are always in quest of something beyond. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I press on."—Condensed from Things that Matter Most, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

How to Seek the Best. A kingly man is like unto a merchantman. So we are to have the characteristics of business men, even when we are engaged in the affairs of the Highest. The majority of us are about as little like merchantmen in our religious life as could be very well conceived. And yet this is the Master's demand. We are to be business-like in our search for pearls. What must be some of our characteristics? First of all, we shall have breadth of outlook. A good merchant has an eye for new markets, for fresh opportunities in new fields. The man of kingly life shall seek his pearls in many markets and over wide fields. He shall seek them in worship and in prayer and in praise. He must look for them in the crowded plains of human fellowship. And, secondly, he must have the ability to fix attention on details. The vision of a merchantman is not only telescopic, it is microscopic. "He lets nothing escape him." So we must give keen attention to the neglected trifles of life. Lowly duties must be carefully scanned.

Thirdly, the kingly life must be distinguished by method and order. A fine business man must have method in his work. He has not only principles, he has rules; he has not only a general system, he has a detailed order. Men who have no method are soon compelled to close their doors. And so it is in the life of the Kingdom of Heaven. We do not stroll carelessly up to the pearls and find them in some haphazard and vagrant loitering. No man lounges into any treasure that is worth having. And that is why so many of us are very poor in the things of the Kingdom. We have no order and method, and the work of one hour is undone by the hour that succeeds it. Look at our prayers. How unmethodical and disorderly! Are they likely to find any pearls? Look at our worship. How little intelligent quest is in it! Is it likely to discover any pearls? Look at our service. How careless it often is and how pointless and unprepared! There are abundant signs that even our Lord himself regulated his life and refused to allow it to frivol away in indefinite purpose and desire.

Lastly, the man in search of goodly pearls must be distinguished by decision. A competent merchantman knows when to act, and at the decisive moment he acts with commanding promptness. In the Kingdom of Heaven, too, there are "tides in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, lead on to fortune." It is a great thing to know when the hour is ripe for decision. It is one of the fine arts of living to know when to act upon an impulse, and when to accept the hints of emotion as to signs of a favoring gale. Here again our Lord is our example. He was very patient, but he was always decisive. No one could move him before the appointed time. No one could stop him when he said, "The hour has come." Such is to be the quality of our quest. We are to be like merchantmen, broad in outlook, vigilant for detail, intelligent in method and decisive in action.—Condensed from Things that Matter Most, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

For Enlargement or Discussion. The Worth of the Kingdom. See Chapter LI of The Master's Way, by Dean Brown.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the great aim of Matthew's Gospel? 2. How did Jesus regard interruption? 3. How did Jesus regard a crowd? 4. What did he do for this particular crowd? 5. What time of year was it? 6. Why did he feed the people? 7. What is the meaning of the miracle? 8. What was done during the War to feed the hungry? 9. What has been done since the War to help feed the world? 10. Has our nation done its full duty in this respect? 11. Have we?

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDES

Golden Text

**They have no need to go away;
give ye them to eat. Matthew 14.16**

LESSON Matthew 14 DEVOTIONAL READING John 17.20-26

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Matthew 15.32-38; Mark 6.32-44; Luke 9.10-17; John 6.1-13

MATTHEW 14.13 Now when Jesus heard *it*, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot from the cities. 14 And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. 15 And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. 16 But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. 17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. 18 And he said, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. 20 And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

22 And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away. 23 And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE FOR THE BLACKBOARD

The Feeding of the Five Thousand — Shows Christ's Pity and Power

I. JESUS LEAVES CAPERNAUM AND IS FOLLOWED BY THE CROWDS, verses 13 and 14. When Jesus heard of Herod's beheading of John the Baptist, he left Capernaum in search of a secluded, uninhabited (for this is the meaning here of the word *desert*) spot on the other side of the lake. Capernaum was crowded with pilgrims on their way to keep the Passover at Jerusalem, and when they heard that Jesus had departed they followed him on foot around the upper end of the lake, reaching the spot ahead of him, as Mark informs us. As always, when Jesus saw a great multitude, *he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.*

II. THE COUNSEL OF THE DISCIPLES AND THE COMMAND OF JESUS, verses 15-18. *When even,* the late afternoon, *was come, the disciples came* to Jesus with the request that, as the place was desert, that is, without villages, he would *send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.* According to John 6.5-9, Jesus put Philip to the test by asking him where they could buy bread for the multitude: Philip replied that two hundred shillings' worth of bread would not be sufficient; and Andrew reported that a lad among them had five barley loaves and two fishes. We may assume that it was after this conversation that the disciples came to Jesus and asked him to send the people away. *But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. Ye* is emphatic here in the Greek. In

despair the disciples answered: *We have here but three loaves, and two fishes.* The fish, as customary, were dried or pickled.

III. THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES, verses 18-21. *Bring them hither to me,* bade Jesus. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass.* Then he *blessed* the food, perhaps uttering this customary form of blessing, "Blessed art thou, Jehovah our God, who causeth bread to come forth from the earth." "Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. The man whose praise is elicited by loaves will also be thankful for the cornfield, the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, for the reapers who gather the corn, for the touch of God in the laborer, and for the millstones which grind the corn that makes the bread. He who took the loaves and gave thanks would also give thanks for the common lily of the field, the daisy of his native land. Indeed, I think we may truly say that the Master's habit of praise made every common thing radiant, and every wayside bush became aflame with God"(Jowett).

Then he *brake* the loaves and kept giving—for this the imperfect Greek tense of the verb means—the pieces *to the disciples, and the disciples* gave them *to the multitudes.* After all had eaten as much as they wished, *twelve baskets full* of the *broken pieces* remained. The Greek word κοφίνους means the provision baskets which were carried by Jews. Probably each of the apostles had one. Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost, Jesus had ordered, John 6.12. *And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children.*

IV. JESUS SENDS THE DISCIPLES AWAY THAT HE MAY BE ALONE IN PRAYER, verses 22, 23.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Five loaves and two fishes, verse 17. Barley bread was so coarse that it was given to Roman soldiers only as a punishment, but it was the customary food of the poor in Palestine and therefore of Jesus and his company of disciples. The loaves of bread were very thin, round or oval in shape (the Arabs at the present day have the same "circles of bread") and they were always broken, never cut. The fish were not fresh, but dried. The Greek word translated *fish* may be used for anything eaten with bread as a relish. "When the fellahin are on a journey or at work in the fields, they content themselves with dry bread eaten with a few figs, raisins or dried fish," says Mr. Wilson. "The midday meal of a middle class house in Jerusalem in the first century consisted of fish from the lake—locusts baked in flour, or honey, onions, and meat. For desert the cheapest fruits were grapes and figs. The poor had to live more moderately. The lake fisherman, in particular, rarely tasted meat: bread, hard boiled eggs, and the produce of their fishing, with locusts and water, formed the staple of their food."

Tray of Bread, Palestine

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When Jesus saw the multitudes, what feeling gripped him? What did he do for them? When had Jesus himself hungered? Why did he then refuse to create bread by a miracle? Who said, "Freely ye have received, freely give"? For what lesson was this our Golden Text?

The Time of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. In the other Gospels we are told that after the return of the apostles from their preaching tour on which he had sent them, Jesus met them on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, probably at Capernaum, and listened to the report of all they had done and said. Then it was that Jesus proposed a trip across the Lake for a short rest, in a secluded spot where they could be alone.

The Place. "The desert place" was near Bethsaida (Lk. 9.10), on the eastern shore of the Lake (Jn. 6.1). It was carpeted with grass, verse 18, but was an uninhabited spot.

Assign paragraphs 51, 130-132 of In the Master's Country.

TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: JESUS FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Jesus was very tired, and so he said to the disciples, "Let's take a day for rest." They took a boat and fixed the sail and turned the boat across the lake; and then there came a great crowd of people, and you could just see their faces fall. "Why, there's the Master going away." And then somebody, I don't know who, pointed a finger across the lake. "I believe he's going so and so; let's run around the lake and meet him when he gets out." And so they ran, and as the old saying is, the longer way round proved the nearer way there. When Peter shoved the boat on the sand and they got out to rest, there were five thousand men, and he said to Jesus, "A day off?" Do you think Peter screwed down his brow and said that? Do you think John said, "Can't they see the Master wants a bit of a quiet day to himself?" Do you think so? I do, because they were so much like us. But the tiredest man of all was moved with compassion, that great heart-word used nine times of Jesus. His heart throbbed faster, and he spent the whole day in talking, preaching, helping, healing.—Dr. S. D. Gordon.

What is the rest of the story?

What Tony Learned. Tony came bursting into the room of the Italian Industrial School so full of excitement that he could hardly get the words out.

"Teacher, it was true!" he cried to the superintendent, the only one in the room at the time. "The story she tell-a last week, it was true. I tell-a my mother when I go home last week, and she say ask-a da teacher, is it true; and I come back and find-a teacher as she start home, and she say: 'Yes, Tony, Jesus need-a da boys to help him. Those people go hungry if da boy not give-a da lunch, and he need-a boys now, else he can't do what he want.' And I tell-a my mother, and she say if that-a true, better we help him. Dis-a week, come my mother's sister and two little children to live with us, 'cause her husband, he kill-a on da railroad, and my mother say, they can't stay—we have no room, and only little macaroni, and few potat—not enough for any more. And they all cry, and say they want stay. And then I think of da story, and I tell-a my mother better we help them a little while, and my mother say they stay a little while. Then I think, an' I write my uncle in da country and tell him, an' today my uncle come in town an' bring barrel potat.

"Then my mother cry an' say he like-a da Jesus in da story, and he ask about Jesus, and I tell-a da story to him, an' he say he like-a that Jesus, an' it was da boy that start da food coming both times, so now I know da story true. My mother and my uncle come here to church tomorrow."

Tony stopped for sheer want of breath just as his teacher came in. "Of course, Tony," she said at once; "didn't I tell you that Jesus couldn't do without the boy's help?"

On Tony's face there shone an expression as if his help was to be counted upon hereafter.—Fanny L. Kollock, in World-Wide.

How Subhodra Fed the Hungry. When Jesus took the bread and fish to feed the people who were hungry, he told us, too, who love him, to feed those who are hungry. Most of the boys and girls who go to Sunday-school in America do not get very hungry, although sometimes they think they do. But almost always there is enough food somewhere in this country where we live. We may not have as much ice-cream and candy as we would like, but there are some countries on the other side of the world where the people have only rice and grain. They eat it every day. Then there comes a day when it does not rain, and the rice and wheat cannot grow. Then everybody is hungry.

There was a great lady in India called Ramabai, who had a beautiful big home for women and girls. They had all the rice they needed to eat. But one day the people all through the country found they had nothing to eat. The rice and grain did not grow. It would not rain. The sun burned up everything. The cows died. The people grew very thin. Then the great lady who had made the home for Subhodra and the other girls, asked if they could help. "Every Sunday," said she, "we will not eat our dinner, but we will go without it, and save it to give to the hungry children who do not have any food." So all the girls who lived in this house gave their Sunday dinners to the hungry children.

Then one day the great lady, Ramabai, went out to where the people were dying because they had nothing to eat. Some of the mothers had run away from their babies because they had nothing to give them to eat. Ramabai brought

the babies to her pleasant home. She said: "I can't take care of all the babies unless the girls will help. Who is willing to take a baby to feed and watch and dress?"

Subhodra said, "I will." She picked up a baby that was not pretty. She said, "I would rather have a baby that isn't pretty. Anybody could love a pretty baby." So the poor, thin, ugly, baby has somebody to feed and love it.—Condensed from Missionary Comments.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Matthew 14.19. Or, Mark 6.34 (to the word *shepherd*).

A little in Christ's hands goes far.—Frederick Langbridge.

"God gives us food that we may share
This gift with others.
May we not let another lack,
But give—to others!"

"O Lord, great Author of all good,
Rest thy hands upon this food,
Bless it so our lives may be
A constant service, Lord, to thee.
Accept our prayer. Amen."

ALTERNATE TOPIC FOR JUNIORS: THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

Lesson Material: Luke 2.8-20.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Two beautiful lessons are given from which to choose today: the lessons of how Jesus fed the hungry multitudes by the Sea of Galilee, and the Christmas lesson of how the news of Jesus' birth came to lowly shepherds while at their task of caring for their sheep.

Which shall we choose this glad Christmas Day? Two years ago many classes remembered both events in a beautiful way. They had a special service entitled "Magi of Today." And then every one brought gifts of money for the four hundred thousand children in Bible lands who were in danger of starving at that time. The appeal for those hungry children was made throughout our continent, and our schools and those in Canada together raised two million dollars to help feed the hungry ones over there.

The Shepherds and the Angels. It was dark and cold, and the bright stars were shining overhead. The shepherds would have much preferred sleeping comfortably in their homes, but they had to look after their flocks. Hard and disagreeable as the task was in those conditions, they did their duty. It began for them as a night of toil and vigil, but it ended in being a night of song and glorious news.

Why was it the angels came to those men instead of going to the king or the priests or some of the important citizens of Bethlehem? Because the latter did not have the right spirit for such a vision. But the shepherds did have, for they were spiritually-minded men who were looking and longing for the coming of the Christ.

The angels announced to these shepherds that the Christ had really come, had come as a Babe in a lowly manger over in Bethlehem, had come to be the Savior. Theirs was a message of good-will and peace, a song that the world has never forgotten and never will forget.

At first the shepherds were afraid, but they soon forgot their fear as they watched and listened. And they believed and obeyed. They might have scoffed at the thought that the King was lying in a manger. They might have laughed when the angel said, "You will find the Christ is a little Babe!" But they never doubted. They received and believed it all. They went to Bethlehem and found the Babe and came back filled with a great joy.

A Christmas Legend. Do you know why the holly has red berries? A long time ago, so the story goes, the trees heard a rumor that if a king should walk in their shade the first tree that should recognize him would become more beautiful than all the others. Now it happened that outside the little town of Naz-

areth there grew a forest of big cedars, firs, and oaks, and among them one little holly tree. One day a boy came out of the town and walked through the forest. Each of the big trees thought, "He is looking at me"; but the little holly tree as it watched him forgot about itself. Many times the boy walked in the forest until the big trees became so accustomed to him that they gave him no attention. But the holly tree still watched him and said to itself, "Surely if a king were to come he would not be so beautiful as this boy. He is always kind; the birds and the animals are not afraid of him. I wish he were my king; I should like to obey him."

A "Bambino," by Andrea della Robbia
Ornamenting the Facade of the Hospital of the Innocents, Florence

After a time the little boy no longer went to the forest. The holly tree missed him very much; but it thought about him and tried to be like him and to do the things it believed he would want it to do. It was kind to the birds and the animals. It spread its branches so that the birds could build their nests in them. It made little houses down among its roots for the small animals. The other trees thought it was not worth noticing, but it kept sweet-tempered and did not quarrel with them.

The little boy grew to be a man and traveled about the country, telling people about God and how men might please God by loving one another. But one day wicked men took him and put a robe on him such as kings wear, and made a crown of thorny twigs and placed it on his head. Then they nailed him to a cross, and over his head was placed a sign which read, "The King."

A wonderful change now came to the little holly tree growing just outside of Nazareth. Among its dark green leaves little red berries began to grow until it was arrayed in a royal robe of scarlet, because, you see, it was the first of the trees to recognize the King.

Yes, it was Jesus, King of heaven and earth. To recognize him as King, to desire to obey him and be like him, is to become beautiful—beautiful in character. It means to be arrayed like him in a robe of righteousness. Amid the hurry and the excitement, the gift-making and the gift-receiving, the good-will and the joy of the Christmas season, shall we not take time to think that it is the birthday of our King?

But one day's loyalty to the King cannot keep the heart warm and the life true for the remaining three hundred and sixty-four days. The loyalty of Christmas, its love and good-will, must overflow into the rest of the year. The first Christmas carol sung by the angels that night outside of Bethlehem, must re-echo throughout the year.

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings
of great joy which shall be to all the people:
for there is born to you this day
in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord.

Chorus:

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men
in whom he is well pleased.

—The Sunday School World.

A Christmas Prayer.

God send us store on Christmas Day
Of friends, and health, and mirth:
And bless us with that dream alway
That blessed the world on Christmas Day:
"Good will, and peace on earth."

So sing we all on Christmas Day
Old songs of Christmas cheer,
God grant us brave, true words to say;
Yea! help us live some better way
In all the glad new year.

—Charles W. Kennedy, in Scribner's Magazine.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Memory Verse: Luke 2.11.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part—
Yet what can I give him?
Give my heart!—Christina G. Rossetti.

Let all strife and hatred cease:
Kindness, love, good will and peace—
Thus we keep the Christmas time.—C. E. Brooks.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: HELPING TO FEED THE HUNGRY

Note. For the Alternate Christmas Topic—A Savior Born—see the First Lesson of this Quarter.

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. It is a very familiar lesson which we have today. You know the story perfectly, every detail of it, but it is a beautiful story and has lessons which we all need. In an address Mr. Raymond Robbins introduced the story in this striking way:—

"One time, after Jesus had preached to a big crowd of folk, out on a hillside, a long way from town, a long way from the kitchen, the disciples were afraid the people would be hungry and make trouble. So they came to him and said: "Lord, there is a big bunch out here, and the first thing you know we shall have trouble. May they depart? Don't keep them here till they get too hungry."

"If ever man was to get out of spiritual food something that would answer instead of bread and beef, that was the time. Did Jesus say, 'They have just heard one of the great sermons of history, let them be filled with spiritual food and not think about anything to eat'? No. He used that divine power that came down out of heaven, to make bread and fish in sufficient quantity to feed the multitude."

The Child at the Door.

A child is crying beyond our door
In the cold and the wind and the wild downpour,
(How can we sit at ease within?)
A child is calling beyond our gate,
Starving and stark and desolate,
(How can we bid the feast begin?)

The doors of the world are heavy and tall,
But the cry of a child can pierce them all
(A cry of a child in anguish sore.)

And though it sounds from a land apart,
'Tis at our threshold and at our heart,
(A child is crying beyond our door).

How may we sit content and warm
When a child is lost in the night and storm?
(The night of famine, the storm of War),
How may we break our bread in ease,
Hearing the voice of the least of these?
(A child is crying beyond our door).—Theodosia Garrison.

Give Ye Them to Eat. Say not, We cannot, we have nothing to give. Go to your duty, every one, and trust yourselves to him; for he will give you all supply, just as fast as you need it. Take upon you readily, have it as a law to be always doing great works—that is, works that are great to you; and this is the faith God so clearly justifies, that your abilities will be as your works. Make large adventures. Trust God for great things. With your five loaves and two fishes, he will show you a way to feed thousands.—Horace Bushnell.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I learn what my Savior thought about a crowd; I learn what my Savior felt about a crowd; and because I learn those two things I learn how the disciples of Jesus have to think and feel about a crowd.—Dr. J. A. Jowett.

All God's biddings are enablings.—Berridge.

The boy who had the loaves and fishes could have done four things with them. He could have thrown them away; he could have eaten them himself; or he could have distributed them himself among his friends;—or as he did—give them to Christ: and we may do these four things with our lives.—John Douglas Adam.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE MINISTRY OF JESUS TO THE MULTITUDES Or, THE MINISTRY OF THE KINGDOM TO PHYSICAL NEEDS

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson. Among the many changes brought about by the Great War is the changed attitude toward the multitude. There is still great room for improvement, but the change is noticeable nevertheless. Perhaps there are few now who would refer, as did a member of an overcrowded New York church, to those who came to hear the popular preacher but were not church members as "peregrinating religious rubbernecks." When John Wesley began his work as a national evangelist in England and Scotland some of the clergymen refused to let him preach in their churches, because, they said, "The people crowd so that they block up the church and leave no room for the best of the parish." This scornful attitude toward the multitude has always existed. "All the splendid intellectualism of Greece existed for the favored few; beneath that glittering edifice of art and letters lay the dungeons of the slaves. It was the same with Rome; it was an empire of privilege, in which the multitude had no part. Jewish society was built after the same pattern, except that with the Pharisees the sense of religious superiority bred a kind of arrogance much more bitter than that which is the fruit of intellectual or social exclusiveness."

In Jesus' attitude toward a crowd we see the greatness of his heart. Again and again we read of his having compassion upon the multitude: to him they were always as sheep without a shepherd, and no matter how weary he was or how important the teaching they interrupted, he always uncomplainingly and gladly turned to them in pity. In the desert place apart where he and his disciples had gone because rest seemed imperative and freedom for counsel necessary as well, Jesus might well have refused to be annoyed and interrupted by the crowd. Not so. Whoever came to him he would in no wise cast out; a crowd was ever to him an opportunity.

The Miracle. We stand here in the presence of mystery. We need not be disturbed by that fact. We live and move and have our being in the presence of mystery. I cannot explain how a man can fling away a bushel of seed wheat in the spring and then, because it has been wrought upon by the mysterious forces of sunshine and soil, rain and dew, go out four months later in the harvest and gather thirty, sixty, sometimes a hundred fold. Before the ever-

lasting mystery of unfolding and expanding life wrought upon by these universal forces, the wisest men stand amazed. The same hand of power and wisdom which works in the wheat-field was at work that day by the Sea of Galilee when the hungry multitude was fed. In every situation there are unrealized possibilities waiting for the wise touch of power."—Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown.

The Meaning of the Miracle. The miracle of feeding the five thousand is told by all the Evangelists, but John alone gives its true meaning. The multitude followed Jesus to Capernaum and there he said to them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you. I am the Bread of life.

We call Christ's miracles "wonders," deeds that show unusual power; "signs," because they prove his unique, divine mission; they are also parables, because they illustrate in the physical realm his power in the spiritual kingdom. He satisfied the physical hunger of the five thousand by feeding them with barley bread; and this was an acted parable, typifying his power to satisfy their spiritual hunger with the Bread of Life, himself.

Conservation. As we observe how God's gifts are used by men we are struck by two facts—the divine plenty and the human waste. God is so bountiful and man is so extravagant! Jesus set about gathering all the fragments of the food that no waste might result. It is a question which is the more wonderful, the Master's creative power or his wise economy.

The influence of this attention to details must have been lasting on the minds of the disciples. They saw how careful Jesus was even with broken biscuits and fragments of fish. It was a life lesson to them in a practical way. Later they, too, would find that they possessed resources of which they were not aware before their Master's death. They might be tempted to use them recklessly. But the example of the baskets of fragments would come back to their minds and save them from the sin of waste.

The word *conservation* is a new and significant term in our modern religious vocabulary. It means the gathering up of the spiritual results of a great experience in such a way that nothing will be lost. Churches sometimes pass through a period of revival. An evangelist stirs the community with his message. Decisions for the Christian life are made in considerable numbers. Then the meetings close and the evangelist goes away. Now comes the great problem of conservation on the part of the churches. It is immensely harder to save and construct the immediate results of a "revival" into permanent forces for welfare in the community than it is to organize and carry through the original movement.

The same fact may be urged concerning conventions of young people and student conferences, like those at Northfield, Lake Geneva, and Estes Park. Unless the men and women who go to these places of inspiration come back to their communities and colleges with changed lives, the value of the meeting is open to serious question. The task of conservation is to add the practical to the ideal, to follow up vision with service, to give concrete expression in duties to the inspirations that have come in the conference hall. The peril in every deeper impulse of the spirit is that it will not yoke itself up quickly with duties and deeds that will express it.—Dr. Ozora S. Davis, in Meeting the Master.

The Motive Power of the Salvation Army. Its motive power is a genuine love of the people. When William Booth looked for the first time on the dreary horror of Whitechapel, he wrote, "I fell in love with the great crowds of people who seemed to be outside the pale of all Christian churches." He fell in love with them. They were terribly unattractive people, coarsened and debased by a most vile environment and the vilest habits. They were the despair of politicians and statesmen. They were so unused to human treatment that they would not believe in the Army, and at first found cruel sport in assaulting those who sought to help them, and mocking those who would redeem them. They were the true peril of society, the predestined victims of the police court, the gaol and the gallows. Nevertheless he loved them. He believed they could be loved out of the pit into which they had fallen. He said: "We are moral scavengers, netting the very sewers. We want all we can get, but we want most the lowest of the low." He loved them not for what they were but for what they might become. He saw Christ in them,—

"Saw his Lord in his suffering brothers
And not in the clouds descending."

He saw a thousand potencies of moral beauty under the grime of evil. It is this genuine love of men which has given the Salvation Army its power and its triumph—a great love of the people and a great faith that Jesus Christ saves to the uttermost.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

The Food which the Kaiser Hoarded when Others Were Starving. After William Hohenzollern had fled from his castle in Berlin, an investigation was made of its food supplies. Here is the report:—

"In large white-tiled rooms, was everything, really everything in the way of food. Preserved meat in great cans, white flour in sacks piled up to the high ceilings, thousands of eggs, gigantic basins of lard, coffee, tea, chocolate, jellies, and preserves of every kind arranged in apparently endless rows. Hundreds of blue sugar-loaves, bags of peas and beans, dried fruits, biscuits, etc. The value of the stocks amounts to several hundred thousand marks. Were it not that these food supplies are needed for better employment at the moment, I should like to suggest that they should remain undisturbed in a national museum as an everlasting token to the German people in order that their children and their children's children might still see how in Germany, while millions starved, 'those by the grace of God' held out."

Helping to Feed the World. At the signing of the armistice Mr. Hoover said: "We have now to consider a new world situation in food. We have to frankly survey Europe, a Europe of which a large part is either in ruins or in social conflagration; a Europe with degenerated soils and depleted herds; a Europe with the whole of its population on rations or in varying degrees of starvation, and large numbers who have been under the German heel actually starving."

"The nation's obligation and opportunity to serve stricken humanity in war-torn Europe by helping to provide sustenance until the next harvest will demand further sacrifices by the American people," Mr. Hoover declared in an address at a conference of State Food Administrators. "Conditions of famine exist in Europe that will be beyond our powers to remedy, even with the carrying out of the plan to ship from America 20,000,000 tons of foodstuffs during the next year. In Northern Russia alone there are 40,000,000 people who have but little chance of obtaining food this Winter. Millions of others throughout Europe who can be reached must be fed.

"In the matter of wheat and rye the large supplies that have accumulated in Argentine, Australia, and other inaccessible markets appear to us to supplement the stores of clear wheat bread for the world. It will, however, require a continued high percentage of milling, with continuous economy in consumption and the elimination of waste."

For Enlargement or Discussion. 1. Jesus never exerted miraculous power unless it was needed; the crowd had been there only a few hours and could have gone without food; what was the motive for the miracle? "The real explanation of the miracle is to be found in the great discourse in John 6. Jesus had just heard of the tragic end of his forerunner, and the news made him realize afresh that he, too, was marching straight to his death. The thought of his own great sacrifice was filling his mind; it was because he was realizing with fresh vividness that he could only save the world by giving himself for it, that he performed this miracle. It was Passover time, and he thought how he, the true Paschal Lamb, would soon be slain for the life of the world. This feast was prophetic of his cross and passion. By it he said to the multitudes, 'I am the Son of God, I am the Bread of Life. Thus this bread which I break and give to you is to your bodies what I am to your souls.'"

2. Duty not measured by ability. See a sermon with this title by Dr. Bushnell. "When the modern missionary movement started with William Carey and thirteen pounds, it did look absurd, did it not? No wonder skeptics laughed. But look at what has actually happened. The movement so begun bids fair to evangelize the world. Christ multiplied our poor loaves and fishes. Let us trust his power."

3. How the United States met the gigantic task of helping to feed the world.

Note. If you have no further use for this volume, please send it to a missionary in the Philippines or in Korea, where this year's lessons are studied next year. For an address, write to Dr. Price: see ¶ 2, page 438.

REVIEW: THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Golden Text

And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. Revelation 21.5

SELECTION FOR READING Isaiah 25.1-8

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS Revelation 21

A REVIEW FOR JUNIORS AND INTERMEDIATES

Christ's Words and Deeds. There are two books of the Old Testament which are called the Books of Kings: why? We might well call the Gospel of Matthew the Gospel of the Great King, for it ushers us into the royal presence of Jesus the Christ, and is wholly occupied with the life and message of our King.

During this Quarter we have had several incidents in his life and have studied his words and deeds. What shall we say of them collectively?

In the first place, they are *surprising.* We have never heard or seen anything like them. Think of what he said about prayer, worth-while treasures, anxiety, God's care, fruit-bearing, the Kingdom of Heaven. Think of what he did in healing the centurion's servant and multiplying the loaves and fishes.

Both his sayings and his deeds surprised the people: "Never man spake like this Man," they said; "We never saw it on this fashion."

Then *his words and his deeds agree.* This is exceptional, for many people fail to practice what they preach: upon comparing their deeds with their words you find a great contrast. You intend to act as you feel and say, but do you always? Jesus always did. He preached faith, and he believed. He preached mercy and brotherliness, and he practised them. He said men ought always to pray and not to faint, and he spent whole nights in prayer. His actions illustrate and explain his words. We need only to look at what he did in order to understand what he meant by trusting in God, loving one's neighbor, being good to one's enemy.

His words and his deeds are *immortal.* The very fact that we are studying them today proves this. Uttered and done nearly two thousand years ago, they have never been forgotten. They have survived all time and change, and are more wide-spread, more famous today than ever. They moved men then, and they move men still. Things said and done by other men centuries ago do not kindle our hearts, or inspire us to lofty action. But Christ's words and deeds do. A little piece of radium is inexhaustible. It gives, yet never loses. It throws off heat, yet remains as hot as ever. Christ's words and deeds are like that bit of radium. Their power is inexhaustible, and they will be so to the end of time.

They were *fruitful.* They were never spoken or done in vain. In his day they attracted and moved the crowd, made followers and disciples, and changed lives. And they have the same effect in the lives of men and nations today.

The reason? It is found in what Christ was and is. He abounded in faith and devotion to God, lived in God and for God. And that is the secret of all lives that have any likeness to his.

A REVIEW FOR SENIORS, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

The Life and Teaching of Jesus. Jesus was destined to take the moral government of the race upon his shoulders. He was to alter the flow of the spiritual currents in human society and ultimately to change the history of the world. He did it all while he was still a young man. He was only thirty-three years old when they put him to death upon the Cross. He had used thirty of those thirty-three years in quiet preparation for the great tasks which were to come. No wonder the three years of which we know so much were mighty when we think of the thirty years of preparation standing behind them! Ten years of training and discipline for one of public action! Ten days of study and

devotion for one day of healing, redemptive effort! Ten hours of silence and prayer before God for one hour of speech in the ears of men!

How marvelous was the life of this Young Man who changed the history of the world! If we could get away from the idea that he is a stained-glass window or a marble statue or a lovely story in a book which most men seldom read—if we could only see him as he was, the Word made flesh, real, warm, alive, our hearts would leap.

He was born in the manger of a stable. He grew up in a carpenter's home and in a carpenter's shop. He never saw the inside of a college, yet somehow he learned to think straight and to speak as never man spake. He lived with the birds and the flowers, the trees, the hills and the stars. He thought deeply upon the interests and needs of men until he knew what was in man and needed not that any should tell him—he told them. He looked up with pure eyes and a pure heart until he saw God. Therefore, when he spoke his word was with power; and when he lived his life was with power; and when he stretched forth his hand, his touch had healing in it.

His mind was exceedingly broad. He had never been outside the borders of his own little country. which is about the size of the State of New Hampshire. Yet he moved about with a dream of world-wide empire in his head and the vision of a Kingdom Everlasting in his heart. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." When he sent forth his disciples to do the work he had taught them to do, this is the way their commission read: "Go into all the world. Make disciples of all nations. Baptize everybody into My name and the name of the Father." He had courage—think of his standing there, a Young Peasant in little Palestine, talking about a world-wide empire over which he would rule by his own unseen spirit!

He was to change the history of the world—how did he go about it? In the first place, he changed men's thoughts about God. Men are influenced by their environment—they are transformed by the renewing of their minds. They are moulded by the thoughts they think and the desires they cherish. As a man thinketh in his heart touching the things that matter, so he becomes.

This is true as regards all our prevailing habits of mind, but the potency of right thought is to be found at its best when we come to a man's thought of God. Men had been filling their minds with all sorts of wild and foolish guesses about God. This Young Man placed upon the lips of the race and within its heart that great word "Father." "When ye pray say, 'Our Father.'" Begin with those words on your lips, with that thought in your mind, and with the filial spirit in your heart. When you worship, "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." When you would turn away from the evil of your life say, "I will arise and go to my Father." When you want assurance say, "No man can pluck me out of my Father's hand." When you come to die, say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

This great truth was the heart of this Young Man's message to the race—God is our Father. God combines the strength and the tenderness, the authority and the devotion, the responsible control and the capacity for self-sacrifice, which belong to fatherhood at its best. Take the highest you have ever seen in fatherhood and raise it to the *nth* power, and then trust that, for that is God.

He also changed men's thoughts about goodness. What does it mean to be good? When may we call any man good? There were men who felt that being good meant obeying the law, keeping the rules, ordering one's life in accordance with the endless specifications outlined in the Sacred Books. If a man could get through the day without having gotten off the path for an inch, then he might be esteemed good. And the race groaned under the burdens which this system had bound upon the consciences of men. It was all outward, formal, mechanical, impossible.

Jesus set himself against that whole conception and method of goodness. "Except your righteousness exceeds that," he said to the men of his day, "You will not in any wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Goodness must be inward, vital, spontaneous. A good tree brings forth good fruit. It cannot otherwise. It does it as naturally as a bird sings. Therefore, make the tree good and let the fruit come as it will—it will be all right. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good deeds. He does it spontaneously. Therefore, make the heart right and let the man do as he pleases. Love God with an honest heart and love your neighbors as well as yourself, and then do as you like.

Love works no ill, either Godward or manward; therefore, love is the fulfilling of all law.

In the third place, Jesus put within our reach a power which would change our hearts. When you are frankly honest with yourself you say, as I have said to myself, and as Paul said before us, "The good that I would I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!"

Here was one who knew that men are weak and mean, yet he believed that every one of them through faith in him could have a life strong and rich and fine. He actually believed that men who have bumped their way clear down to the bottom of the moral stairs could climb up again. "I am the door," he said, "to newness of life. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. He shall go in and out and find pasture."

He tasted the whole human situation for every man. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and tried by those ordeals which culminated on Calvary. "In this world," he said, "Ye shall have tribulation." The word he used means literally "pressure." Life is not all music and refreshments. Every honest life must be lived under pressure. It is compelled to do its work under the steady weight of duty, obligation, responsibility. It is compelled to fight a good fight in order to keep its faith and finish its course.

In the end that is the making of any life. Steam does all its work under pressure. Turn it loose in the air to go where it will and it becomes useless. In this world we must live under pressure. But Jesus bade men face it all undaunted and radiant. He planted in their lives an eternal hope, "Be of good cheer. I have overcome—you can."

He knew that his own purposes were entirely right—"I do always those things that please the Father." He knew that he was strongly entrenched in the love and confidence of those who knew him best. He knew that the great moral order was on his side and that he could afford to wait for results. In that high confidence he moved ahead as serene as the sun shining in its strength. "Be of good cheer," he cried, when he stood within a hundred yards of Calvary.

His victory was not meant to be exceptional, it was meant to be representative. It was to be shared and repeated by all those who walk in fellowship with him. How much it means when a man is making his way through some dark forest or climbing some stiff mountainside to find the faintest sort of a trail. "Other men have passed this way," he cries, "and what men have done, men can do again."

Here is a trail of spiritual victory, reaching on and up through all manner of untoward situations! His own patient, bleeding feet marked it out and thousands of his faithful followers have traversed it in their turn.

In the face of it all how can any man of sense and conscience do less than follow him and act with him until his will is done on earth as it is done in Heaven!—Condensed from Five Young Men, by Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown.

A Personal Question.

"Have you and I today
Stood silent as with Christ, apart from joy or fear
Of life, to see by faith his face;
To look, if but a moment, at its grace,
And grow, by brief companionship, more true,
More nerved to lead, to dare, to do
For him at any cost? Have we today
Found time, in thought, our hand to lay
In his, and then compare

"His will with ours, and wear
The impress of his wish? Be sure
Such contact will endure
Throughout the day; will help us walk erect
Through storm and flood; detect,
Within the hidden life, sin's dross, its stain;
Revive a thought of love for him again;
Steady the steps which waver; help us see
The footpath meant for you and me."

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Juniors. 1. Where was Jesus born, where was he taken as an Infant, where did he spend the first thirty years of his life, and what city did he make his headquarters when he began his public ministry? 2 and 3. What were the three temptations of Jesus, and how did he answer each? 4. When Jesus called the four fishermen, what did he say to them and what did he mean? 5. Write the Beatitudes. 6 and 7. Finish these sentences: Lay not up for yourselves.....Behold the birds of the heaven.....Consider the lilies of the field.....Even so every good tree.....And whosoever shall give to drink..... 8. Name the twelve disciples. 9. What is a parable? 10. Tell the beautiful story of how Jesus once fed a multitude.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. In what Chapter of Matthew are the Parables of the Kingdom found? 2. Tell the lesson which these words recall: "What Christ does is the best answer to the question as to who he is." 3. Describe a scene in Jesus' life. 4. Write the Beatitudes, and explain the first one. 5. What did Jesus say about trusting God? 6. What did he say about prayer? 7. Why was Jesus tempted? 8. Whom did Jesus commend and why? 9. When did a great crowd go out into an uninhabited region, and for what purpose? 10. What parables did Jesus give to illustrate the growth of the Kingdom?

For Young People and Adults. 1. What does the phrase "the Kingdom of Heaven" stand for? 2. Which parables teach the extensive growth of the Kingdom? 3. Which parable teaches the pervasive and permeating power of true religion? 4. Which parables teach that the Kingdom is worth any sacrifice? 5. Tell one of Jesus' parables and explain the meaning. 6. When you are inclined to worry, what words should you read? 7. When you long for rest, what words of Jesus are comforting? 8. Where will you find Jesus' idea of a Christian? 9. What is his idea of true prayer? 10. What are some of his principles of righteous living?

WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

For Juniors.

1. A Story of a Great Cure.
2. A Story about Five Thousand People.
3. Two Short Stories that Jesus Told, and what they Mean.

For Intermediates and Seniors.

1. The Visit of the Shepherds and the Visit of the Wise-men.
2. The Beatitudes and their Meaning.
3. The Lord's Prayer and what it Means.

For Young People and Adults.

1. The Three Temptations of Jesus Explained.
2. Christ's Standard for Living.
3. The Parables of the Kingdom.
4. Jesus the Great Physician.
5. Jesus the Great Teacher.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Juniors. 1. What did Jesus say in Mark 9.14 about little children? 2. What did he once do to little children, as Matthew tells us in the ninth chapter? 3. What admirable qualities have little children? 4. Learn Matthew 19.14. 5. Tell the parable by which Jesus taught God's care for everyone.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. From what must one turn, verse 3? 2. What did Jesus say about greatness in Mt. 20.27? 3. What was the millstone which Jesus must have had in mind when he spoke the words of verse 5? 4. Tell the story of Jesus blessing little children. (Mk. 10.13-16.) 5. What does verse 8 mean? 6. How can one be a "stumbling block" in the Christian life of another? 7. What responsibility have we for the younger and weaker?

For Young People and Adults. 1. What is greatness? 2. What ambitions would Christ approve? 3. Explain verse 3. 4. Explain verse 8. 5. What other lessons about humility did Jesus teach? 6. In what respects is a little child a model for a Christian? 7. What dangers surround childhood today? 8. What is our responsibility concerning these stumbling-blocks for little children? 9. What other saying of Jesus does verse 7 naturally recall? (Mt. 26.24.) 10. What did Jesus teach about entering the Kingdom?

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